

The Guardian Monday June 9 1998

Results from Montreal

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Tuesday June 9 1998

Abu Dhabi (OS 2)

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Abu Dhabi (OS 3)

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Abu Dhabi (OS 10)

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The Guardian

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

This section, page 3

What are they playing at?

European weather in G2



Jerry Dammers

Still a special kind of guy

G2 pages 8-9



University funding

Education with interest

G2 pages 12-13

Another TV documentary exposed as fake

Michael Sear Giffard and Laurie Flynn

A SECOND award-winning documentary by Carlton Television, which claimed it had secured an "exclusive interview" with Fidel Castro, is today exposed by the Guardian as a fraud.

The documentary, *Inside Castro's Cuba*, was broadcast on ITV's flagship current affairs series, *Newsnight*, first, and watched by 2 million viewers.

It was produced by the same team which made the Carlton programme *The Connection*, which purported to show a Colombian

drugs running operation into Britain.

That programme was exposed as a fake by the Guardian and is now the subject of a government investigation and an internal inquiry by Carlton.

The one hour Castro programme, which was commissioned by ITV on the basis of Carlton's access to the Cuban leader, won two international awards from the US-based Worldfest and National Educational Film and Video Festival.

In the publicity for the documentary Carlton claimed the producer, Marc de Beaufort, had spent a "nervous shattering year" chasing the Cuban president until he was finally granted "rare access".

But a Guardian investiga-

tion has established that the key claims are false.

There was no Carlton interview with Fidel Castro. Clips in the film of President Castro talking to the camera were in reality unlabelled archive footage provided in good faith by the Cuban government.

These were passed off as a one-to-one interview with Marc de Beaufort.

The Cuban government told the Guardian: "President Fidel Castro has never given an interview to Carlton Television or producer Marc de Beaufort."

A Cuban diplomat in London said the government was angered by the deception and by the way Carlton had publicised the documentary. "It is a fake," he said.



Castro documentary footage: archive, not an interview

Castro's personal cameraman, Roberto Chile,

who supplied the archive footage and also appeared on the credits of Carlton's film, told the Guardian:

"The interview [with Mr Castro] is false."

Carlton refused to provide the Guardian with details of its "exclusive interview" with Mr Castro.

Instead, Peter Rnshton, Carlton's head of press and publicity, said: "This is a billings matter and the answers can only come from the programme maker, Marc de Beaufort, who is not of the country."

Mr de Beaufort was unavailable for comment and is believed to be in Colombia.

The revelations follow last month's Guardian investigation into another Carlton documentary.

We revealed how *The Connection*, a multi-award-winning documentary about the Colombian drug trade to Britain, was a fake.

Carlton and the Independent Television Commission, the government watchdog, have since begun separate inquiries into the

programme.

If Carlton is found guilty of making and broadcasting a fake, the ITC could revoke its licence, impose a fine or reduce the licence period by up to two years.

The same Carlton team which made *Inside Castro's Cuba* - Mr de Beaufort and Carlton's then head of documentaries, Roger James - also made *The Connection*.

Commenting on the latest revelations, an ITC spokeswoman said passing off archive footage as an interview would be misleading and a violation of the legally binding programme code. In particular, "respect for the truth".

The Labour MP Austin Mitchell, vice-chairman of

the Commons all-party media committee, said: "It is clear there is a lack of internal checks and an obsessive desire to sensationalise to get ratings. If Carlton can't or won't control it then it has got to be done by the ITC."

Tom Sackville, a former Tory minister who met Castro in Cuba, said: "If this turns out to be a fraud like the appalling deception practised over *The Connection*, this is another worrying sign that Carlton are riding roughshod over rules on quality standards in broadcasting."

He added: "I'm sure the Secretary of State for Culture and the Media (Chris Smith) will take note of this when he next considers renewal of ITV franchises."

Nigeria in crisis as dictator dies

Alex Duval Smith Africa Correspondent

NIGERIA'S ruling military junta was meeting in crisis session last night to debate the future of Africa's most populous nation following the sudden death of its revered leader, the human rights pariah, General Sani Abacha.

As the official news agency of Nigeria reported that Abacha had died from a heart attack in the early hours of yesterday, troops sealed off government buildings in the administrative capital, Abuja, and the reigning military council prepared to plan the succession.

State television said the meeting of this provisional ruling council, on which all Nigeria's most senior officers sit, was being chaired by the chief of the defence staff, Major-General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who also announced Abacha's death.

That death - and some reports said that Abacha's burial had already happened, according to Muslim tradition - raised immediate questions about who might succeed him.

At the summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) currently taking place in the West African country, Burkina Faso, speculation centred around two figures close to the Nigerian leadership: Maj-Gen Abubakar, who

is also the main government spokesman, and the Emir of Kano, leader of the Muslim north of Nigeria. Also mentioned was the military governor of the capital, Lieutenant-General Jeremiah Useni.

Abacha, who died aged 54, seized power in 1993 after the cancellation of presidential elections. He had come under mounting internal criticism amid indications that he was preparing to appoint himself civilian leader in elections due in August, he was to have been the sole candidate.

The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, last night said: "We hope that after the death of General Abacha there will be an opening for a stable transition to an early return to democracy, with the election of an accountable civilian government which will restore the human rights situation there... but it's quite possible another member of the military will simply take over," said a spokeswoman.

Ken Wira, son of the executed author and human-rights activist, Ken Saro-Wira, said: "It is hard to say what this will mean for Nigeria because the circumstances of Abacha's death are so suspicious. The military sealed off his residence so nobody knows how he died. It could be some sort of palace coup to ensure succession of a [particular] military wing."

But it was unclear last night whether the military leadership of Nigeria would be cohesive enough to unite around a single successor. Until recently, Nigeria, with an estimated population of 120 million, was the world's fifth oil producer. But it is crippled by corruption, fuel shortages and a credit crisis with the International Monetary Fund.

Neither was it certain whether the August presidential elections would go ahead. Speculation about Abacha's health first surfaced after a papal visit to Nigeria in

March, but was then denied by officials.

Yesterday, Nigerians were said to be shocked: "It came out of the blue," said a Lagos resident. "People are confused. It is too early to say whether it is seen as a good thing for Nigeria, or not."

Thousands of people lined the streets of the northern city of Kano for the arrival of Abacha's remains. "People don't know what to think," said a Kano shopkeeper. "It's true some people are sad but some will not be so sad either. We just worry over what comes next."

Abacha had made few recent public appearances, apparently becoming reclusive and wedded to his government compound in Aholu Rock in Abuja. He last appeared on television last Friday.



A galaxy of stars last night paid tribute to Linda McCartney at a memorial service at St Martin-in-the-Fields, central London. About 500 people gathered in the streets around Trafalgar Square to pay their final respects. PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN SMITH

Strong public backing for on-the-spot drug fines

Austin



Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

ON-SPOT penalty fines for possession of cannabis have been given strong backing by the public, according to a Guardian/ICM opinion poll looking at attitudes towards drug abuse, published today.

The use of parking-style penalties for minor drug offences as an alternative to police station official cautions or courtroom prosecutions is believed to be under consideration by Home Office ministers.

Customs officers already use on-the-spot penalties to

punish travellers they discover with small amounts of cannabis. Keith Hellawell, the recently-appointed drugs tsar who has strongly resisted calls for the legalisation of soft drugs, is believed to have considered the idea of fixed penalty fines.

About half the people caught by police in possession of cannabis now are taken to a police station and given a formal caution if there is no evidence of intent to supply. The remainder are generally fined after a court hearing. On-the-spot fines would provide a much more immediate form of punishment and save police time.

The Guardian/ICM June

poll also shows that the public gave strong backing, by 65 to 27 per cent, to the idea that employers should have the right to introduce tests to check their staff are not taking drugs.

Such company testing programmes have become widespread in the US and some American employers have started to introduce similar schemes in Britain.

The scale of the backing for drug testing at work is surprising since the Home Office has assumed in the past that it would lead to civil liberties objections and would be regarded as legitimate only in high-risk situations.

It is already a criminal offence for certain workers, such as airline pilots and train drivers, to be unfit through drink or drugs while working.

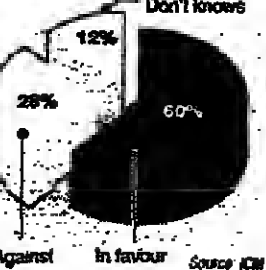
But the surprising levels of support for drug testing generally in the workplace is likely to influence policymakers. The Health and Safety Executive will shortly issue new guidance on the treatment of drugs in the workplace.

Other key findings from the poll include overwhelming public support for the Government's policy of introducing "drug awareness" school

turn to page 2, column 3

Spot fines

The government is considering introducing "on the spot" fixed penalty fines for the possession of cannabis. Would you be in favour of or against these on the spot fines?



Inside

Kevin MacKenzie is to leave the Mirror Group in the wake of high-profile departure to rock the tabloid press in less than a week.

Britain

British overseas courts are to recognise a woman's contribution to husband's career in an attempt to stop poverty.

World News

A hearing of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was shown in instruments of assassination used by apartheid forces.

Sport

England's push for victory in the first Test at Edgbaston was to no avail when rain washed out the final day's play. Sport section

Obituaries 10; Comment 5; Crossword 16

Quick Crossword 16 Radio & Television 16

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Sketch

The new caring, sharing Harriet



Simon Hoggart

DO feel sorry for Harriet Harman (and you won't read that sentence anywhere else, I'll wager). It must be utterly draining to have a whispering campaign against you. Sir Bernard Ingham, who he briefed about the fate of doomed Tory ministers, was at least open about it.

The Black Spot was served, and that was that. You were done, dead in the water — savanara, sucker. It was like the moment when the judge pulled on the black cap; you had a pretty good idea what was going to happen next.

Under New Labour, the whole thing is more insidious. The drip, drip, drip of press speculation. The certainty that your colleagues are muttering, secretly and scornfully, behind your back while being friendly and supportive to your face.

Your civil servants don't say a word to you, but you can hear them whispering next door about the latest leak. Even your driver knows your fate before you do.

Now and again a newspaper sends some venomous and dysfunctional hack to write an article saying how awful you are, and what butts is not so much the abuse, levelled after perhaps 10 minutes' acquaintance, but the knowledge that everywhere in Westminster and Whitehall, the article is being clipped out and lovingly savoured.

So I thought Ms Harman handled herself with a certain dignity. American murderers, who can endure years on Death Row, often try to change their characters, finding God, or raising cage birds, or studying for degrees. Ms Harman has decided to spend her last days by suspending normal party politics and offering a benevolent kindness to everyone she encounters.

Gone were the fierce demands that single parents got

themselves out to work. "Working parents do not only need good child care, they need time with their children, around their birth and when they are ill."

"A majority of the workforce are women now, and most of them are somebody's daughter and somebody's mother. We must recognise family responsibilities."

And she wasn't just cuddly towards parents, who in the past would have been told to get out of the house and start flipping hamburgers.

Theresa May, a newly promoted Tory spokesperson (they are so desperate that they are giving frontbench jobs to people who have been in the House barely more than the equivalent of the teenage boys Hitler sent into action towards the end of the war) asked her first question.

She accused the Inland Revenue of removing tax breaks for workplace nurseries. The old Harman would have laid about her. A spume of ersatz outrage would have flowed over the hapless Ms May.

Instead Harriet graciously congratulated her on her promotion. "I particularly welcome the point she made, about the tax treatment of workplace nurseries. I shall keep her informed about this. She has come to the despatch box, and she has made an important point."

Tories whistled in surprise. Ms May looked a little stunned, like a boxer in his first professional fight finding himself being kissed by his opponent.

Labour MPs were puzzled and confused. Was this an attack on the Treasury and on Gordon Brown's tax policy? Having accepted the inevitability of her fate, was she turning herself into a backbench rebel, a latter-day Norman Lamont?

In the same session, MPs discussed women's rights and concerns, a topic of perennial interest. Lorna Fitzsimons (Lab, Rochdale) talked about the "Listening to Women Exercise".

William Hague and the Conservatives are currently "Listening to Britain". Tony Blair is engaged in his ongoing programme of "Listening to Rupert Murdoch". There's so much damn listening going on, no one has time to do any talking.

Review

Familiar family dysfunctionality

Lyn Gardner

Sea Urchins

Scotland/Touring

WE'VE been here before. Sharmar MacDonald is once again down at the water's edge with a family drama which — like *When I Was a Girl* I Used To Scream And Shout and *The Winter Guest* — has prickly, dissatisfied mothers, blossoming daughters and a lot of not particularly nasty secrets at the bottom of the rock pools on the sea shore.

It is 1981, and 11-year-old Rena and her Scottish mum Ailsa and Welsh dad John are not enjoying their annual fortnight's holiday in Wales with John's brother, David, and his family. Ailsa and John scrap, and Rena's dismay is compounded by the fact that she can't sing and play the guitar as well as her father would wish, and that her cousin, the know-it-all Noelle, has already sprouted breasts.

For the first act, the play and Iris Brown's evocative production dawdle around while the characters play the guitar, sing the odd song and stare out to sea with soulful looks that suggest either severe stomach pain from the primum stove bacon baps or terminal melancholy.

In the second act the pace speeds up to a crawl and we find out why they are all so blue as family skeleton piles up upon family skeleton. John and his brother's wife Dora go for a roll in the long grass, babies are raised from the dead, parentage is questioned and growing up proves hard to do.

You wouldn't mind the familiarity of it all so much, if the tone of the piece wasn't so

hackneyed. How many times before have we seen and heard this kind of memory play, filtered through the watchful eye of the child who one shimmering summer's day sees her flawed family clearly for the first time and moves forever across that invisible line that divides childhood innocence from the knowledge of the adult world.

Sea Urchins began as an award-winning radio play and I imagine that you might more easily forgive the languor for the sake of atmosphere in that particular medium. But the transition to stage has not been clearly thought out and Brown's production is as cumbersome as the design which relies on torn blue plastic for its sea and sky effects.

Macdonald has an exceptional gift for comedy and it doesn't desert her here — in a play heavy with angst, real and imagined, the real truths and tragedy emerge out of the laughter.

Dora's assertion that she only ever wanted babies, not children who would grow up; Ailsa's jealousy of her bosomy teenage niece Rhianon. "You're too thin and too young," she spits. Rena's perky assertion at the beginning of the play: "I'm never going to be a woman." But of course she will.

In the end it is a despairing play which suggests the desperate Rena who prays for a serial killer to come and wipe out her entire family is already grievously damaged by the past, that Noelle is right in believing that she will grow up to be like her own mother, and that Ailsa's bitter belief that there can be no real friendship between women, is true. I don't believe that and I don't think this play will persuade you in its truth either.

EU takes first step on Nato force to halt Serbs, as Robin Cook tells President Milosevic: 'Back off now'

'Last warning' on Kosovo

Martin Walker in Luxembourg and Richard Norton-Taylor

EUROPEAN Union foreign ministers yesterday unanimously demanded that Serbia violence stop and all army and special police units be withdrawn from Kosovo. They backed Britain's plan for United Nations authorisation for Nato to use "all necessary means" to halt Serbia's use of force.

"I hope Milosevic is listening this time — this is his last warning. He should back off now," the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said on behalf of the European Council of Ministers.

In the course of an unprecedented personal attack on the Serb president as a man who was looting his nation.

"Milosevic has acquired a very large part of the wealth of Serbia — that is why no

options are excluded," Mr Cook added. "He has also undermined free expression within Serbia, acting sharply to reduce independent broadcasting... and given new licences to his wife, his son and his daughter."

Tony Blair — who spoke on the telephone over the weekend with Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin about the crisis — said yesterday after talks with the Swedish government: "We are considering along with our other allies and friends what action can be taken to stop what is an appalling and unacceptable situation."

At least 250 people have died since February in clashes between Serb forces and fighters demanding independence for Kosovo, a province overwhelmingly peopled by ethnic Albanians set in the midst of the present-day

remains of Yugoslavia, which is dominated by Serbia. Thousands of refugees are on the move, and the fear is that the conflict will spill over into Albania and Macedonia.

Britain is now hoping to rally Nato defence ministers behind a military plan this week, and then — after a meeting on Friday of foreign ministers of the G8 group of leading industrial countries — to get a UN resolution authorising Nato forces to intervene if necessary.

The plan's rough outline is to use diplomatic pressure and the threat of air strikes to push for a withdrawal of Serbian police and military units, and replace them by a Nato-led peacekeeping force.

But in Washington, President Clinton's national security adviser, Sandy Berger, said the administration was not discussing military inter-

vention at the moment. And Mr Cook — while saying he "would not exclude an international (peacekeeping) presence in the event of a political agreement" over Kosovo — admitted: "We are a very long way from that international agreement."

Like the US administration, neither the Russian nor the French government is fully behind the British scheme, which envisages the Nato peacekeepers staying for up to a year, while new elections are held to establish a legitimate autonomous government in Kosovo.

The province would, however, remain formally a part of Yugoslavia. Refusal to accept an independent Kosovo is seen as an essential carrot for the government of Serbia and for Russian support.

Pressure was put on the Russian president, Boris Yel-

sin, yesterday by Chancellor Kohl of Germany during a meeting in Bonn. German sources suggested that Mr Yeltsin was left in little doubt that the Western goodwill his economy requires would be helped by his support on Kosovo.

Russia's defence minister, Igor Sergeev, appeared to take the point by saying his country would not in principle oppose Nato intervention in the Kosovo crisis if it took place with UN Security Council approval. "It could be on the basis of the decision of the Security Council... Russia would not be opposed to this."

Europe yesterday also agreed to ban new foreign investments in Serbia — the main source of the Serbian government's hard-currency income. An arms embargo and a freeze on Serbian overseas assets are already in force as a

result of Serbia's role in the Bosnian conflict. The European Council also agreed to back an instant humanitarian mission run jointly by the EU Commission and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to deal with the many displaced people in Kosovo.

The mood at yesterday's foreign ministers' meeting was grave. Ministers said the images of renewed violence and refugees had brought back Europe's feelings of shame over Bosnia, and the determination not to let it happen again. Even Greece, traditionally close to Belgrade, insisted that "we put the blame where it needs to be put — on Milosevic".

"We cannot tolerate in any part of Europe a return to ethnic cleansing," Mr Cook insisted.

Kosovo crisis, page 5

MacKenzie's exit stuns Mirror staff

Surprise move for Talk Radio as career of former Sun editor takes another twist

Stuart Millar, Roy Greenslade and Simon Beavis

KEVIN MacKenzie is to leave the Mirror Group, in the second high-profile departure to rock the tabloid press in less than a week.

The resignation of Mr MacKenzie, the former editor of the Sun credited with revitalising the Mirror after less than six months in overall control, last night prompted furious speculation over where he intends to go next.

He told the Mirror board that he was leaving to put together a bid for Talk Radio, a commercial speech-based station, in a move which could see him going head to head with Chris Evans, the Virgin Radio boss. But last night speculation was mounting that he may be planning a return to Rupert Murdoch's News International.

Although he contacted Talk Radio to voice an interest in buying it, he has not been in contact since and has not requested the necessary company information. Observers believe it would be difficult for him to raise the necessary capital without it.

The rumours were heightened by David Yelland, who took over as editor of the Sun yesterday. He is believed to have hinted to staff earlier in the day that changes at the Mirror were in the pipeline.

The announcement is the latest surprise from a man who has made a career out of unexpected changes of job. Colleagues and friends said they had been stunned by his decision to leave just as the Mirror had arrested its circulation decline and closed the gap on its arch-rival, the Sun.

"The place is like a bomb-site," said one Mirror journalist. "We are all shell-shocked."

Piers Morgan, editor of the Mirror, said: "We are extremely sad about it. We had a brilliant six months working together. He is very instinctive man and I am sure that his instincts will be right for him on this occasion. They always have been in the past. It will not mean a change for the Mirror. We worked very closely together and we agreed about the way forward."



Kelvin MacKenzie... may bid for Talk Radio, as friends say he "wants to run his own train set" PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

The success of the Mirror's move upmarket, in a relaunch spearheaded by Mr MacKenzie and Mr Morgan, was one of the factors behind Stuart Higgins' resignation last week as editor of the Sun. He had resisted management pressure to follow the Mirror upmarket.

Mr MacKenzie's departure comes at a time when a possible bid for the Mirror Group

from the German company Axel Springer would give him lucrative share options. But he is understood to have told friends he neither needed nor cared about the money.

Mr MacKenzie, who earns £320,000 a year plus £50,000 in bonuses, and had a "get-out" clause in his contract, also confided to them that he was "sick of making money for other people".

"He has always wanted to run his own train set," one former colleague said.

A successful bid from the German company might also have seen Mr MacKenzie parting company with Mirror Group.

Talk Radio is known to be ripe for an outside bid. CLT, the Belgium-based media company which owns 63 per cent of the company, want to

sell its stake for about £40 million.

Although it has vastly improved its audience figures, it is still losing £700,000 a month. Other media groups, including Associated Newspapers, owners of the Daily Mail, also considered a bid but decided the risks were too high. One bid has been received so far, from Jaycor, a US-based holding company.

Radio calling

1963: Left school with one O level before getting his first job in journalism as a junior reporter on the South London Mercury. He admitted to being universally reviled by colleagues for stealing their stories and adding his own byline.

1972: Joins the Sun as a sub-editor, moving to night editor. Described as a technical perfectionist who was loud, noisy and rude.

1978: Picked by Rupert Murdoch to be managing editor of his tabloid, the New York Post. His rudeness was said to have horrified American journalists who hated his habit of stripping them of bylines if he did not like their stories.

1980: Rejoins the Sun as night editor.

February 1981: Told by Murdoch never to darken his door again after defecting to become night editor of the Daily Express.

June 1981: Murdoch makes him editor at the Sun. He allegedly left the Express because he did not like the building. At the Sun he spawned headlines such as Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster, Up Yours Delors and Gotcha!

January 1994: Becomes managing director of BSkyB, the Murdoch-owned satellite television company.

August 1994: Resigns as managing director of BSkyB after feud with chief executive Sam Chisholm. MacKenzie described him as a bully.

October 1994: Joins the Mirror Group in charge of television interests. Launches topless darts, the news bunny and weather in Norwegian on Live TV.

January 1998: Takes overall control of Mirror newspaper titles as deputy chief executive and managing director of Mirror Group.

June 1998: Resigns his position at Mirror Group. Exact future unknown.

Strong public backing for on-the-spot drug fines

continued from page 1

Lessons for children aged between five and 11.

More than 75 per cent of the public believe that drug awareness lessons should be given in primary schools, demolishing fears that parents would be shocked by it.

A significant minority (47

per cent) also believe the illegality of such drugs actually encourages teenagers to experiment with them. Only 13 per cent believe that criminality actually deters teenagers from trying them.

Among 18 to 24-year-olds, the proportion who believe that illegality is part of the attrac-

tion rises to 64 per cent against 8 per cent who think it is a deterrent.

The poll also shows the generation gap in attitudes to illicit drugs remains as stark as ever. A majority (53 to 47 per cent) of those polled aged 18 to 24 agreed with the state-

ment that "cannabis is no worse than smoking or drinking".

A similar proportion (58 to 46 per cent) of the same age group also rejected the notion that if you use soft drugs, you will end up on hard drugs.

Legalisation is unlikely to lead to a boom in drug use, with only 16 per cent of the

under-34s saying they would buy drugs if they were made legal.

The older generations aged 35 and over do not share this approach. Only one in three of this group agreed that "using cannabis is no worse than smoking or drinking", while 66 per cent of them be-

lieved that if you use soft drugs you will end up on hard drugs.

ICM interviewed 1,201 adults aged 18 and over by telephone between June 5 and 6, 1998. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

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WHAT HAPPEN IF YOU NO

Monsanto accuses Charles of pandering to green lobby, while opponents of gene-modified food say his views reflect public concern

Prince 'over-reacting' to genetic engineering

Nick Hopkins

THE Prince of Wales came under attack yesterday for "over-reacting" to the dangers of genetically modified food.

Monsanto, the multinational company at the forefront of agricultural bio-engineering, accused him of pandering to the green lobby and refusing to acknowledge advances in the field.

But the prince received the full support of consumer and environmental groups, who believe his views reflect widespread public concern.

Buckingham Palace said he stood by everything he had written in an article in yesterday's Daily Telegraph.

Warning that genetic engineering was taking mankind "into realms that belong to

God and God alone", the prince wrote: "If something does go badly wrong we will be faced with the problem of clearing up a kind of pollution which is self-perpetuating. I am not convinced that anyone has the first idea of how this could be done, or indeed who would have to pay."

Genetically modified (GM) plant breeding raised crucial ethical and practical considerations, he said, calling for a wide public debate. Choice backed by comprehensive labelling was needed so people knew what they were eating.

The prince was particularly concerned that some companies wanted approval to grow pesticide-tolerant GM crops in Britain. He called for a moratorium on their introduction, claiming that they would devastate local wildlife.

Although he did not men-

tion Monsanto by name, it was clear that his broadside was aimed at the US-based company. Last weekend it launched a media campaign to raise awareness in the UK of the benefits of GM crops.

The article's timing was not lost on the company's senior executives, who defended its work yesterday.

Monsanto was careful not to show disrespect for the prince, but there was barely concealed frustration over his views.

Colin Merritt, its technical director, said: "The prince believes in organic farming, and he is closely associated with people from the organic movement and green pressure groups. His arguments are the ones we are familiar with from the green lobby."

"He does not have much information coming from people on the other side of the

debate. I think some of his views are out of touch."

Dr Merritt said a huge amount of research had been done in recent years, and it all pointed to the practical advantages of using GM crops.

"The risks that he talks about are not based in science. We now understand the chemistry and the genetics far more than we did."

The prince's questioning of the need for GM farming was "a complete over-reaction". There was no way that organic farming could meet the world's food demands.

The National Consumer Council said the prince was in tune with public concerns. It criticised a recent European Union edict that food which had been genetically tampered with did not have to be kept separate from normal crops and clearly labelled.

GM foods already on the

market include maize, tomatoes and soya, which have been changed to make them pest-resistant or stay fresh longer. About 60 per cent of processed foods contain soya.

A spokesman for the Consumers' Association said: "The process needs to be slowed down. It is possible that GM foods might prove to be a 'good thing', but our concern is that customers are not ready to see them on the shelves yet, and they must be given the choice of whether or not to eat them."

Jeff Rooker, Food Safety Minister, said in launching National Food Safety Week that the prince was entitled to his views but insisted there were strict controls in place to ensure that GM foods on the market were safe.

He said breeders of new plant varieties had always "messaged about with nature".



Prince Charles, outspoken on issues which concern him

Charles on high horse

PRINCE Charles often mounts his high royal horse in deliver profound thoughts on the issues which concern him, writes Nick Hopkins. He has blamed his pronouncements on an "inability to keep my mouth shut".

Gardening apart, the prince's best known pet subject is architecture—he most famously described the National Gallery extension as a "monstrous carbuncle"—but he has also fulminated over:

- The Press. Cynical national newspapers and blinkered pressure groups were eating away at the values of society.
- Inner city housing. Run-down council estates created a "lethal cocktail" of problems.
- Trendy teachers who ignored the great works of English literature. Science, he said, would not bring wisdom or happiness to children.
- Homeopathic medicines. He has called for the government to give patients complementary treatments on the NHS.

News in brief

Police apologise in discrimination case

LINCOLNSHIRE police yesterday apologised and paid undisclosed compensation to Inspector Dena Fleming following a two year legal battle after she was suspended on the full pay by the force for putting a tape recorder in her locker to get evidence of alleged sexual discrimination.

Inspector Fleming, aged 39, who joined the force in 1988, alleged she had been victimised after taking charge of a male dominated shift at Gainsborough. In February the tribunal ruled against her claims of sex discrimination but said she had been victimised after making them. Inspector Fleming is thought to have been claiming for hurt feelings and potential loss of earnings on the grounds that she was unable to apply for promotion during her suspension. — Jamie Wilson

Bull gores man to death

WILSON COWAN, 56, a water board worker was yesterday gored to death by a bull which burst out of a field while he was taking samples near the village of Pettinall, Lancashire.

Police said the bull had become "agitated" and began bellowing. "The bull then managed to burst through a fence and managed to trap Mr Cowan between the fence and his van. The animal then gored him in the head and body, causing him to be thrown on to the road." The animal is to be destroyed.

Top car thieves jailed

EIGHT members of a gang which stole £800,000 worth of the finest cars they could find from outside expensive homes, hotels and golf clubs in Birmingham and then filmed themselves performing stunts were jailed for up to four years yesterday.

Coventry crown court had heard that the Acocks Green Posse, aged between 18 and 30, favoured BMWs and Porsches and kept the distinctive bonnet badges at home as trophies. Judge Bruce Colles said they had a "premeditated and outrageous disregard of the law" which had resulted in anarchy in parts of Birmingham. — David Ward

Guardian readership rises

THE GUARDIAN'S readership rose by 4 per cent over the last 12 months according to the latest National Readership Survey figures. The paper was read by 1,290,000 people a day compared with 1,231,000 the previous year. During the same period the Independent's readership fell by 12.1 per cent to 738,000.

The Guardian's Saturday paper did even better—rising by 10.6 per cent. The Independent's Saturday edition fell by 9.8 per cent.



The disputed Wtewael painting PHOTOGRAPH: HEATHCLIFF O'MALLEY

Art market awaits outcome of court battle over painting

Masterpieces could flood into sale rooms, writes John Ezard

THE ART market is likely to be deluged with lost masterpieces worth millions of pounds, if the outcome of a London court case reassures their owners.

This prospect was held out by a QC in the High Court yesterday. The case is a dispute over ownership of a 16th century Dutch painting by Joachim Wtewael worth £700,000—one of thousands of works stolen or missing since the second world war.

The paintings include works by many of the most highly regarded artists of the past 700 years.

Last night, from a 102-page list of canvases taken during the war from Belgian galleries alone and never recovered, the Art Loss Register in London instructed:

- Van Dyck's Study of the Descent from the Cross, painted in about 1600;
- Diana Reposing, by Rubens and Brueghel the Younger;
- A landscape by Brueghel the Elder (1600);
- A Boy Smiling, by Frans Hals (1620);
- Mary Magdalen, a panel by Hans Memling (1480);
- Salome Dancing before Herod, a Picasso engraving (1920).

Virtually all six would fetch millions if sold today. But those into whose hands they came during the chaos of war fear that their ownership would be disputed successfully by their earlier owners.

This is what happened over the tiny Wtewael painting. The Holy Family with Saints John and Elizabeth and Angels, when a Panamanian corporation tried to sell it through Sotheby's in 1992.

It was withdrawn from sale after doubts were raised in the media about its provenance. Since then it has

stayed in Sotheby's safekeeping, pending settlement of an ownership dispute between the city of Gotha, acting with the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Panamanian company, Cobert Finance S.A.

A main issue in the court dispute is whether a statute of limitations applies to wartime art theft. Yesterday Alexander Layton QC, for the German authorities, told Mr Justice Moses that his decision would be closely watched by London auction houses at the centre of the art trade.

"There are many thousands of works of art known to exist before this century's wars which remain hidden," Mr Layton said. "The outcome of this case may have a significant bearing on the extent to which those who now have those lost works of art will sell them for their own profit, without fear of claims by their rightful owners."

Mr Layton said the Wtewael story was like a detective novel. Owned by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha since 1826, it had after 1928

been part of the important Saxe-Coburg-Gotha Ducal Foundation for Art and Science collection.

During the war it was most likely put into storage at a nearby castle in what was to become the German Democratic Republic. Its postwar fate was controversial. Mr Layton said, Cobert claimed that Adolf Kozlenkov, a colonel in the Soviet forces from Latvia, took the picture and gave it to a neighbouring family for safekeeping in 1945.

After he died in 1982 it was returned to his son, Alexander, who sold it to a Zairean who arranged for it to be taken to Berlin, where it was passed on to an art dealer.

But the German authorities said archives showed no sign of a colonel from Latvia called Kozlenkov. The authorities argued it had been kept in the Soviet Union until 1986 and later sold to Cobert.

Cobert is due to argue that the German civil code gave authorities only 30 years after the theft to bring a claim for the work's return.

Trial of alleged IRA figure in Docklands bomb must go on despite peace process, jury told

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

JURORS in the trial of a man accused of the IRA London Docklands bombing were told yesterday that, despite the hopes of an end to violence, they still had to try a very serious crime.

James McArdle, aged 29,

pleads not guilty to conspiring with others to cause explosions and to the murders of a newspaper and his assistant at South Quay in Docklands on February 9 1996.

The Jury at Woolwich crown court in south London was told that McArdle had already stood trial but that, through no fault of his or of

the prosecution, a retrial had been ordered.

Prosecuting counsel John Bevan QC said that little more than two years ago an enormous lorry bomb had exploded at 6.59 pm at South Quay. Six warnings, most of them using a recognised IRA code word, had been given between 5.30 and 5.45 pm.

"The purpose of a warning

is to provide an excuse for the bombers," he said. They did not want the bomb to be made safe because that would defeat the object of the exercise.

PC Roger de Graf, had warned newspaper Innam Bashir and his assistant John Jeffries of the bomb but, sadly, they had not acted swiftly enough and were killed instantly when it exploded, said

Mr Bevan. "You may think it something of a miracle that other people were not killed." Many had suffered serious injuries and one woman office-worker had required 300 stitches to her face. Damage worth £150 million was done.

"This was a major operation which must have involved a large number of people, each with their own

expertise," said Mr Bevan. "Mr McArdle's role was a central role." Although there was no direct evidence that he had planted the bomb, his finger, thumb and palm prints had been found on a number of other items, the court heard.

The case, which the jury were told would last about three weeks, continues.

Divorce courts to recognise woman's contribution to husband's career in attempt to stop poverty Ex-wives to share husbands' pensions

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

DIVORCE courts are expected to allocate shares of the husband's pension as well as the family home in 50,000 cases a year under a draft bill published yesterday by the Government.

The move is being presented as proper recognition of a wife's contribution to her husband's career and an effective weapon to counter poverty among women in retirement.

Although the plans would cost the Government a net £60 million a year, largely through tax concessions, they would save a forecast £5 million in social security benefits for poor women pensioners.

Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, said: "Many women who divorce can be left without a share in their husband's pension—despite their domestic responsibilities." Harriet Harman

only a third that of a man.

Pension-splitting is forecast in 50,000 of an expected 180,000 divorces in the first year after implementation of the bill, likely to be in 2000. The £60 million cost to government would be through double tax relief on divided funds.

The cost of administering division of pensions, estimated at £35 million a year, would be borne by divorcing couples—an average £700 where both partners stayed in the same scheme.

marriage might have been. However, the consultation paper states that whether a divorce settlement did include a pension share would depend on "what is fairest in the division of total assets".

It adds: "This also means that any settlement will not necessarily divide the pension rights equally between the parties."

Ministers say men are twice as likely to have an occupational pension, while a woman's is typically worth



Caroline Beamish: "When your husband's a diplomat, it is difficult to get acceptable jobs abroad" PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOWDWIN

In an attempt to avoid a repeat of the fiasco surrounding the 1991 Child Support Act, when the legislative process arguably failed adequately to scrutinise a flawed measure, ministers are seeking comment on the bill.

The draft legislation is open for public consultation for two months. In a pioneering move, it will also be examined by the Commons social security committee, which will take evidence on the proposals and report by the end of October.

Ms Harman described the approach as "a key step forward in modernising the House of Commons".

Archy Kirkwood, the committee's chairman, said: "This is an important new departure for parliamentary select committees. We are happy to accept the challenge of working with the [Department of Social Security] to enhance the openness and effectiveness of the legislative process."

The bill was welcomed by Fairshares, a group which

campaigns for fair division of all assets on divorce.

Sadie Quin, spokeswoman for the group, said: "When we started Fairshares in 1993, everyone laughed at us and said we hadn't got a hope in hell."

Iain Duncan Smith, the shadow social security secretary, also welcomed the bill, but voiced doubts about its practicalities and its long-term impact.

"It could have a prohibitive effect on young couples saving

for retirement," Mr Duncan Smith said. Ann Taylor, the Leader of the Commons, last night disclosed plans for three more bills to be published in draft for scrutiny by select committees.

They are the Food Standards Bill, the Freedom of Information Bill and the Limited Liability Partnerships Bill.

Pension Sharing on Divorce; DSS, The Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT. Consultation until August 7

Kohl and Chirac reject centralised European state

Martin Walker
In Luxembourg

THE FRENCH and German leaders have rejected the goal of a centralised European super-state and embraced the British concept of "subsidiarity", shifting decisions from Brussels to as close as possible to the people.

In a joint letter to Tony Blair ahead of this weekend's Cardiff summit, President Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Helmut Kohl call for "the implementation of the subsidiarity principle in order to achieve a clearer demarcation of authority between the European Union and the member states", and demands an overhaul of "the present mass of regulatory instruments" in Brussels.

"It cannot be the goal of European policy to establish a European central state," the letter says.

"We must rather do all that we can to create a strong EU with the necessary scope for action and the capacity to preserve and foster the diversity and richness of Europe's political, cultural and regional traditions."

But the letter also says Europe must "further develop political union, in tandem with economic and monetary union".

It may also be seen as a polite crowbar which is intended to prise open a debate on institutional reform, ahead of the EU's enlargement into eastern Europe.

President Chirac has been

manoeuvring hard to appoint the former EU president Jacques Delors, to run a special committee on such reform, like the one he ran with such success on monetary union.

Institutional reform means changing the system under which each member state has one commissioner in Brussels, and big states like France, Germany, Italy and Britain get two. This would leave an enlarged EU with an unwieldy 33 commissioners, assuming Poland gets two.

Smaller nations are stoutly resisting any threat to keeping their own commissioners, even as most countries want an extension of majority voting powers in the EU Council.

British officials saw two separate national agendas straining against each other in the text. The Germans have long been sympathetic to the principle of subsidiarity, and worry about public disaffection, particularly German resentment at the loss of the Deutschmark.

The French, by contrast, are concerned at the health of the Franco-German axis after their furious row about the head of the new European Central Bank last month, and are determined to restore the leading role of their partnership in Europe, even if it means spouting anti-federalist sentiments.

Some British officials wryly noted a commitment in the letter to making European "decision-making processes more clearly understandable and transparent". Germany is blocking an attempt by Britain to allow Channel 4 cameras into council meetings.

serbian together

online

The Guardian

صوتك من الامم

Serbian onslaught pushes Albanians together under banner of resistance

Jonathan Steele reports from Peje, where a siege mentality is breeding panic and fear – and furthering the cause of the Kosovo Liberation Army

THE five women sat slumped in the railway carriage on the way to Pristina. Two were on the telephone to talk to relatives abroad. The Serb authorities had a few days earlier cut all phone links in Peje, the province's second city, apparently to raise the psychological pressure as well as to prevent news of their offensive in western Kosovo from spreading.

Suddenly, as the fertile fields fell away and the train passed into low, wooded hills, the middle-aged women by the window leapt to their feet. Their faces were transformed. Beaming excitedly, they waved to someone outside. The other women pushed to the window and joined in. Over their shoulders I could see two armed men from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) sitting under a tree.

From then on, the journey was filled with KLA-spotting. At the next station we saw three members standing fearfully in full view, wearing camouflage uniforms and berets with badges featuring the black Albanian eagle on a red background.

The women's delight was evidence of an extraordinary sense of mobilisation and national unity that has mushroomed in the past few weeks as the Serbs have kept up their onslaught on Kosovo's villages. Two days earlier I was rebuffed by another middle-aged woman when I talked about a KLA road-block. "Don't say KLA. Say 'armed people'. We are all KLA," she snapped.

The Serbs' decision to turn to war has given the KLA a huge boost in recruitment and support. The brunt of the onslaught is being borne by villages, but the war has started to knock at the gates of the cities, too.

Superficially, Pristina seems remote from the fighting. Its pavement cafes overflow with young people. But Kosovo is a small, closely-knit society of fewer than 2 million, and most families have relatives in the countryside. Some of those relatives have begun to appear in Pristina as refugees.

The city was given its first taste three weeks ago of possible war to come when the Serbs blocked food deliveries for several days. Families raced to stock their larders and cellars. Now everywhere the talk is of war.



Serbian police armed with automatic weapons patrol the Kosovan town of Djakovica on Sunday as part of an escort for a group of foreign diplomats on a tour of observation

Nato planners prepare for air-land operation

WESTERN RESPONSE/The drive is on to send the alliance's peacekeepers to the province and hold free elections, reports Martin Walker in Luxembourg

NATO strategists are being asked to prepare for a joint air-land operation in Kosovo which would force Serbian security forces to withdraw, replace them with peacekeepers and hold free elections within a year for a fully autonomous government of Kosovo, which would nominally remain part of Yugoslavia.

When Nato foreign ministers met last week, they gave their military planners three orders for dealing with the Serbian province. The first was to contain the forces into the surrounding

territories of Albania and Macedonia, through "exercises and co-operation with local military units".

The second was to develop options for longer-term Nato deployments in those two countries. The third, which has become the most serious after last week's escalation of terror by Serbian forces, was to look at "military options in and around Kosovo".

The preliminary report from the Nato planners, which European Union foreign ministers discussed yesterday in Luxembourg, said they saw four main options.

success of air power against Serbia in 1995, this is the likeliest option, if backed by readiness to intervene on the ground.

One possibility has been ruled out. This will not be a European-led operation, but rather a wholly Nato affair. What we learned from Bosnia was the need to keep the Americans fully involved, a British official said yesterday. "We also learned that it is not a good idea to leave air power to the Americans and ground forces to the Europeans. And we learned a lot about [Serbian President Slobodan] Milosevic, that only when he is really pushed will he tend to co-operate."

Province at stake as Milosevic considers the spoils of war

SERB STRATEGY/Jonathan Steele questions the motives and tactics behind the offensive and asks whether partition – as in Bosnia – is the ultimate aim of those in Belgrade

AS THE truth of the Serb onslaught on scores of villages in western Kosovo begins to emerge, a question which has dogged the Balkans for almost a decade is again being asked: does the Yugoslav president and Serb strongman, Slobodan Milosevic, have a strategy?

By creating 100,000 Kosovo-Albanian refugees he has certainly guaranteed himself yet more international condemnation. And his actions have boosted recruitment to the Kosovo Liberation Army.

He may have won some support in the rural parts of Serbia which have no access to information other than the tendentious version of events portrayed via state media. But with no elections due this is of little benefit.

Kosovo was the cradle of Serb civilisation has been challenged by non-Serb scholars as poor history but good myth. Most Serbs believe it. It is a high premium on Peje (or Peć, as it is known in Serbo-Croat). Peje is the seat of the Orthodox patriarchate. Decani, a town largely ruined by Serb gunfire but which boasts a revered monastery, is also highly prized.

This view is shared by Western diplomats in Pristina. "If you take the chess analogy, I know how all the pieces move but I don't know enough about

the game to have a strategy. My only strategy is not to get 'checkmated' on the next move. Milosevic is the same. He just wants to bang in there," said one.

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online

Every Thursday in the

The Guardian

Hearing told of S Africa's chemical weapons

David Beresford
in Cape Town

A HEARING of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission into the country's chemical and biological weapons programme was yesterday shown instruments of assassination produced by scientists working for the apartheid government.

Jan Lourens, a bio-engineer who worked on the programme, told the commission that devices for killing opponents of the government included walking sticks and umbrellas which fired lethal pellets, syringes disguised as screwdrivers, and rings with a cavity for poison.

The hearings began after the government failed to persuade the commission to stage them behind closed doors. President Nelson Mandela's legal adviser, Fink Haysom, argued there was a danger that the hearings, if held in public, would lead to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But a panel chaired by Bishop Desmond Tutu ruled that most of the evidence should be heard in public.

Scientists, doctors and military personnel have been called to testify. They include Walter Basson, a radiochemist who headed the programme. He faces prosecution on charges including conspiracy and incitement to murder, the manufacture of illegal drugs, and fraud.

Dr Lourens told the commission he had been transferred from the air force to a "special operations" unit within the army's special forces in 1984. The unit was staffed almost entirely by doctors. He recalled how he had put together a special radio network for members of the unit, and supplied them with sound-up cars and compact assault rifles.

He described experiments at top-secret laboratories involving testing a "new generation" of tear-gas or baton-bombs and attempts to develop ways of reducing the birth-rate among blacks. But he insisted the work was done on a need-to-know basis and he did not know the details.

He said he had been involved in the production of the

assassination instruments, which he described as applicators. Several of the devices, including "needle tubes", were produced as exhibits. Dr Lourens said the tubes, which could be incorporated into an umbrella or walking stick, were spring-loaded and used to inject poison.

A second version of the umbrella/walking stick fired a small ball. "This ball would have a number of holes drilled into it, so you would be able to pack a toxic substance into the ball," said Dr Lourens.

The ball would be fired into the back of the victim's leg and "the person would feel something like a bee sting". Polycarbonate was used because it was difficult to pick up on x-rays.

Dr Lourens recounted how he had taken one of the instruments and two vials of a chemical to Britain with instructions to deliver it to a man called Trevor whom he was to meet at a railway station. They went to a South African safe house near Ascot, in Berkshire.

"At the cottage I demonstrated to him how the mechanism worked. I opened one of the vials... I somehow split some of the substance on to my hand. I don't know how it happened, but I wiped my mouth. I lost consciousness very quickly. There was a bathroom. I recall going into the bathroom and there being a bottle of Dettol, which I drank. With hindsight I have no idea why I drank the Dettol. At that stage I, to a large extent, lost my sight and the Dettol of course induced a lot of vomiting. I woke up a period later."

He said he had reported what had happened to doctors at the special operations unit but they did not believe he would have survived.

Dr Lourens told the commission he had been involved in negotiations with foreign buyers for the sale of weapons technology. One was a customer who wanted a nerve agent called VX but the deal fell through. He did not know which country the would-be buyer was from.

He also met a Syrian who was buying technology. He introduced him to another South African scientist who, he believed, visited Syria. The hearing continues.



President Boris Yeltsin arrives in Germany on a two-day visit to seek help from Chancellor Helmut Kohl to keep Russia's financial crisis under control. He praised Mr Kohl as a true friend and added that the two would be able to resolve his country's problems. PHOTOGRAPH: PETER MUELLER

Kohl's spin doctor swallows bitter pill

Ian Traynor in Bonn reports on the new spokesman whose insults are costing the chancellor good will and potential votes

A STRANGER to the dark art of political propaganda, Otto Hauser has spent his first two weeks as Chancellor Helmut Kohl's new spokesman grating out of control to such an extent that he has given the term spin doctor a new meaning.

He has insulted German Jews, lectured east Germans on how to vote, rudely refused to speak a foreign language, reduced the normally polite and staid Bonn press corps to giggling incredulity, and brought only damaging headlines for a chancellor in a mid-election campaign.

Yesterday Mr Hauser pro-

trated himself before the German and international media, ate humble pie, and promised to be on his best behaviour from now on.

"I'll stick to the conventions and concentrate on reporting the government's work so that there is no more irritation in the future," he said.

In a surprise move two weeks ago, Mr Kohl summarily dismissed his spokesman of three years and brought in Mr Hauser in the hope of reviving a flagging and lacklustre election campaign. The result has been nothing but trouble.

Mr Hauser is also an MP in

able English but when asked last week by the English service of German public broadcasting for an interview in English, he barked: "Go and get a translator... I don't see why I should answer questions in any other language."

He bowed and scraped yesterday, apologised to the radio reporter, and offered interviews in English or any other language he can speak.

That gaffe followed unsolicited tips to east Germans on how to vote in September's general election. West Germans, he told them, were fed up with the east Germans' bad habit of voting for former communists and might need to reconsider stumping up the cash for the reconstruction of the east.

Earlier he had repeatedly insisted that east Germany's

reformed communists were no better than Adolf Hitler's Nazi party, even when pressed on the fact that the Nazis orchestrated the murder of 6 million Jews.

"I was not trying to compare Nazi crimes to east Germany," he then declared after the storm of protest. "I regret that my comments were misunderstood."

With the calls mounting by the day for him to be sacked, Mr Hauser looks likely to survive for the time being. Although he has harmed Mr Kohl, sacking the spokesman after only two weeks would have seemed even more desperate than the decision to appoint him in the first place.

Slovaks start 'unsafe' reactor

Kate Connolly in Prague

SLOVAKIA has started running a reactor at a newly built nuclear power plant even though a team of international scientists warned last month that it failed basic safety standards.

The Mochovce power plant in western Slovakia has for years strained relations with Austria, whose border is only 72 miles from the plant. Vienna says the reactor is unsafe. Winifried Kromp, an Austrian professor who led the inspection team to Mochovce last month, said activation of the fuel rods at such an early stage could lead to "the highest accident imaginable".

But a spokesman for the plant said Slovakia's Nuclear Supervisory Bureau had approved the activation and that the reactor had been commissioned early yesterday morning. Mochovce is expected to be operating at full capacity by July 21.

The Austrian parliament reacted angrily. Chancellor Viktor Klima said he had received no word from the Slovak prime minister, Vladimir Meciar, despite a promise that he would be contacted if the plant was activated. "It is an irresponsible and unfriendly act," he said.

Although Austrian politicians want to show how angry they are, they are wary of sounding alarmist. But towns and villages in the north-east have reportedly been issued with iodine tablets and are being taught evacuation drills.

Newspaper reports have warned the Viennese that they would have 10 hours to leave the capital.

Work began on Mochovce, Slovakia's second nuclear plant, in the mid-1980s but was halted in 1989 because of financial difficulties. Completion was made possible after Bonn guaranteed a loan on condition safety standards were met.

Mochovce was originally made to Soviet design, but was upgraded in line with International Atomic Energy Agency recommendations. But last month's inspection team judged that it did not even meet Russian or Slovak standards, let alone Western ones.

Ex-wife of Gucci 'linked to death of stepfather'

John Hooper in Rome

THE last lover of the murdered fashion tycoon Maurizio Gucci is due to take the stand today at the Milan trial of his former wife, Patrizia Reggiani Gucci, who is accused of paying for him to be killed.

Paola Franchi's testimony has taken on a sensational new significance with reports that Mrs Reggiani is now also under investigation over the death of her stepfather 25 years ago. Fernando Reggiani, like Gucci, was a rich man who died apparently intestate.

In a statement to police, Reggiani's disinherited adopted son has claimed that Patrizia Reggiani and her mother had his father poisoned. Police are considering excluding Reggiani's body.

The case against Mrs Reggiani has rested mainly on the assumption she was driven by spite. Scant attention has been paid to the threat her former husband's developing relationship with his French mistress, to her two daughters' future wealth.

Gucci, the last member of his family to run the fashion empire that bears his name, was shot dead in Milan three years ago. Mrs Reggiani is charged with conspiring with her best friend, Giuseppina Auremma, and the night porter of a one-star hotel, Ivano Savioni, to have him killed.

Mrs Reggiani denies her role in the murder. She admits having spoken of wanting Gucci dead, but claims Ms Auremma and Mr Savioni paid for the assassination so they could blackmail her.

Orazio Cicala, who has admitted driving the getaway car, has testified that the man accused of pulling the trigger, Benedetto Ceraulo, was not the hit man.

Mrs Reggiani's disinherited stepbrother, Vincenzo Reggiani, told police that after his father became ill with cancer Patrizia's mother brought in a doctor who gave him an injection. Newspapers quoted Vincenzo as saying: "A few seconds later he began to gasp. Red spots broke out all over his face, and he died."

He claimed to have overheard Patrizia's mother ask the doctor: "All done?"

French TV in turmoil as chief bids bitter adieu

Paul Webster in Paris

THE farewell note that the head of France's state-run television news sent to his staff at the weekend left no doubt about his feelings for what he called the "odious" hypocrites, troublemakers, backsliders and mediocrities who had driven him to resign after only 10 months in the job.

Yesterday Albert Du Roy, the editor-in-chief at FR2, revealed that reporters, presenters, production staff and management had nearly come to blows in a climate where "hatred was almost palpable and perversity had developed into a work of art".

Mr Du Roy, a veteran television interviewer and former magazine editor, was brought into the troubled network to counter its more popular commercial rival, TF1. The two networks broadcast their main news bulletins simultaneously, with the private station taking twice as many viewers.

France's state network has been a long-running soap opera since the broadcasting monopoly ORTF was split into three in 1974. One of the stations, TF1, was privatised in 1987, leaving FR2 and FR3 run by the state.



Departing editor Albert Du Roy (left) called news presenter Daniel Biallani his chief enemy in a vituperative farewell note.

Almost every month there is a story of government interference, internal backstabbing and crippling strikes at the state network.

In contrast to others who left in silence, Mr Du Roy identified his chief enemy as the station's top news presenter, Daniel Biallani.

He told the newspaper Libération: "They [the news team] can't discuss anything without shouting at each other or accept an agreement without swearing. Any act of authority is considered scandalous, and foot-dragging is the general rule. From top to

A threat to family values, or a lorr lorr laughs? Why Polish Blind Date gives minister a hot flush

Neil Bowdler in Warsaw

THE Polish version of the television dating show Blind Date has come under fire from the Solidarity-led government for advocating free sex at taxpayers' expense.

Randka w ciemno, which is shown weekly on public television, tops a list of programmes cited as undermining traditional Roman Catholic values in a report by the family affairs minister, Kazimierz Kaspera.

The programme is responsible for "enticing young people to spend a night together in a hotel at the licence-payers' expense

with a partner chosen at random in front of a studio audience".

Only the Catholic press and radio escape censure in the report, which is due to be presented to cabinet next week. It accuses the media of degrading society rather than "helping citizens to nurture love for their fatherland and respect for the family".

Women's magazines are lambasted for images of "egotistical" career-driven women averse to child-rearing which allegedly tear young women away from their natural convictions.

Recent high-profile media campaigns aimed at countering domestic vio-

lence are berated for casting men as "alcoholics beating and sexually molesting their children".

One of Mr Kaspera's proposed remedies is to reward "pro-family" media organisations through tax relief.

Poland's Blind Date show is innocuous by Western standards, bereft of the ribaldry and sexual innuendo of the American and British versions.

Edyta Krassowska, the show's producer, said she was surprised by the attack. "It's clean, honest fun; an opportunity to hand over the stage to young people and for them to see a hit of the world for free."

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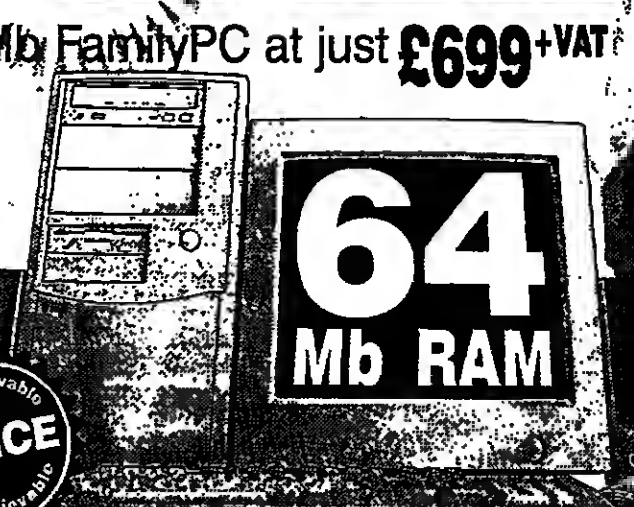
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Diary

Matthew Norman

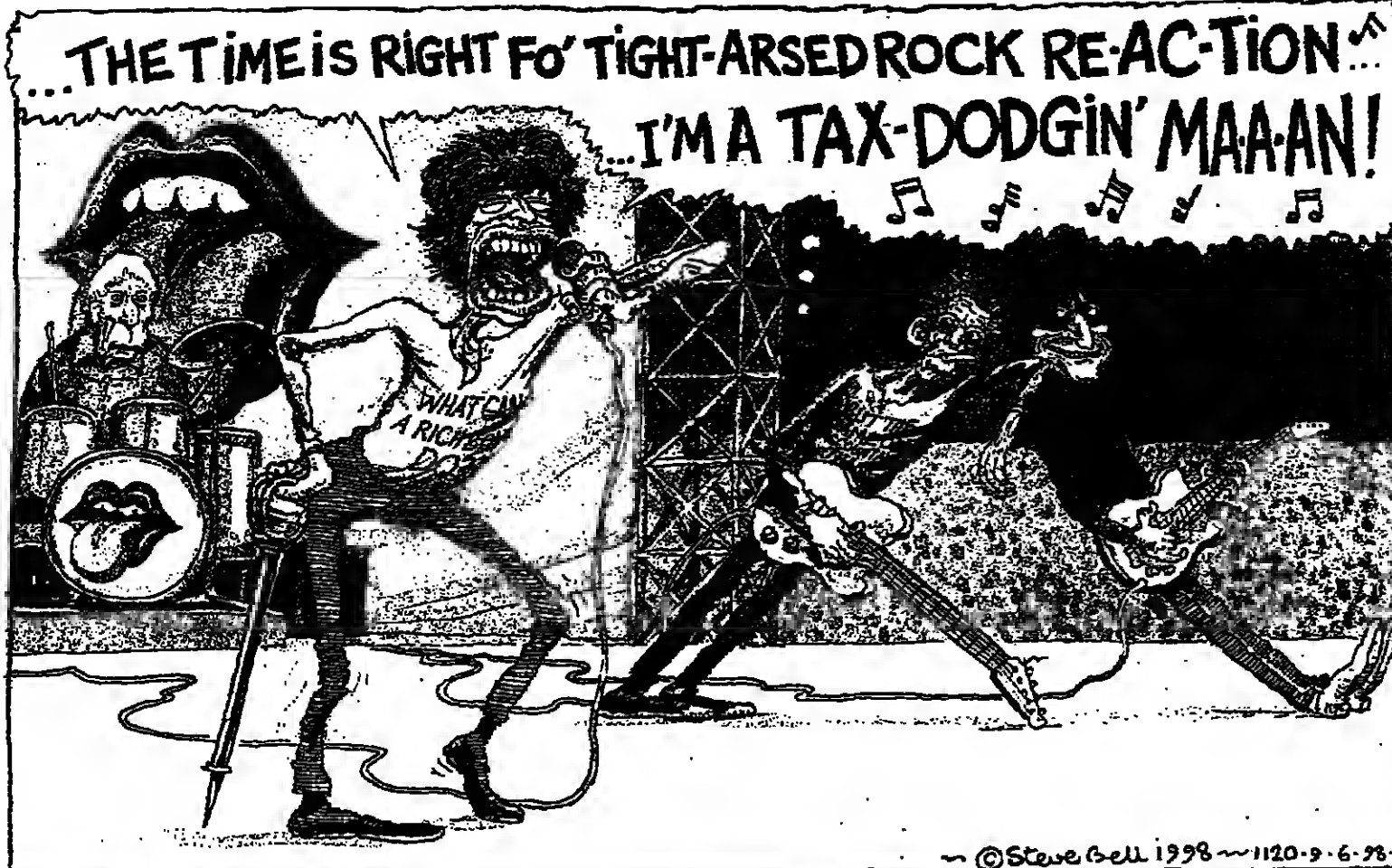
A CONTENDER steps forward in the race for Most Amazing Marketing Strategy of 1998. The nominee is US cosmetics firm Aveda. The naming of brands is a vital area of business life on which companies routinely spend countless hours and tens of thousands. Sensible of its importance, Aveda set about naming a new hand cream... a most remarkable attempt to judge by the press release. The application of a heavy layer at night, allowing the nutrient vitamins and age-defying anti-oxidants to soak well in, will have a rejuvenative effect. It appears, on even the tired and most pitiful of mitts. Of Vitamins A and E, and exfoliating fruit acids (for long lasting softness) I will say no more. Suffice it that 99 per cent of test subjects noticed an overall improvement in smoothness and general hand quality. With such a wondrous product, choosing the right name must have been an intensely arduous task, but who will say that time and money was mispent? Ladies and gentlemen, prepare to welcome into your bathroom cabinets... Hand Relief by Aveda.

THE travel section of the Jewish Chronicle enjoys a comp. "David Lightman," says the standard for a piece headlined "Around the Horn," says Eritrea is a truly memorable destination. "The country, he reports, is virtually crime free, and 'the streets are safe at all hours... all disarmingly innocent.' Enjoy.

I AM shocked to the point of agony by Brian Sewell's London Evening Standard review of Pat Johnson's exhibition. I did not manage to make it to the Fulham Road myself on Thursday, but Mr Sewell—who professes himself fond of the old chump—did. Oh dear, oh dear. "The bigger the sheet of paper the worse, far worse, the quality with figures as ungainly as those of Lowry and Utrillo, and perspective, aerial and linear, that drifts hither and yon in Johnson's profound incompetence," writes the critic. Thank God my sane and rational friend is a big enough man to take criticism. "In mounting this exhibition, Johnson has committed an act of folly to match George Michael's public masturbation and the murder of Mozart arias by Florence Foster Jenkins," concludes Mr Sewell. "Though much less amusing than these it is of the same order of impertinence and vanity."

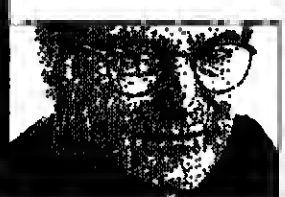
WITH his committal processes almost a month away, Jonathan Aitken makes an unscheduled, very low key appearance in court. Jonathan popped into Bow Street yesterday morning to apply for variation of his bail conditions. He was the one about surrendering his passport. Jonathan asked if his passport might be returned to him, so that he could visit the Arab state of Oman from June 13-16. "This request," says the Parkinsons denied. "There was some discussion," says the clerk of the court. "Had you been in open court you would have heard it."

ONE man who may know more is Malcolm Pearson, the Europhobic Tory peer who recently revealed to Telegraph readers that Jonathan, his old friend from Eton, lied over his Paris Ribz bill to protect his work for M16. Since Jonathan rubbished this curious account, we have since been seeking to establish the reliability of Lord P—the man who was visited, during a varicose vein operation, by a messenger from God. In 1994, meanwhile, after a conviction for refusing to give a breath test, the noble Lord told the Times of a police conspiracy... against wealthy chaps in general—"It's the joyriders and the young who are knocking people down. You won't find people being killed by n-market businessmen"—and himself in particular. The conspiracy theory itself is too obscure to go into. Suffice it that the magistrate described him as "suspicious of the police to the point of mania." Lord Pearson to the witness stand. Call Lord Pearson of Rannoch...



This is not Lords reform at all: it is a conspiracy of deluded rubbish

Hugo Young



THE REFORM of the House of Lords is all about power. What does this place exist to do? To fight, or to pounce about? To endorse or to challenge? To enrich democracy, or extend the life of the second chamber as a post-modern fig leaf for the excesses of the first? The Government is not prepared to give a clear answer to these questions. That's why Lord Richard, the leader of the Lords, devoted the Cabinet's first big speech on the subject yesterday not to the power but to the people. Who shall sit there? It is the easy, but wholly distracting, issue.

Hereditary peers have no place in a legislature, and Lord Richard spent a long time saying so. He sounded like a man who thought he was uttering a sentiment of the profoundest radicalism. That argument, however, has been won, which is already an achievement. It is possible to construct a scenario where the old huffers play their own power-game. They could decline to comply with their expulsion and, having nothing more to lose, scorch their inheritance and block the Government's programme. Though some life peers might become death peers, with Labour's worthless forced into months of all-night sessions to get the measures through, this is an option. But the Tories would have a hard time making it sound in any way legitimate. I don't think it will happen.

After the people, however, there is the power, and as to that, Lord Richard's openness was a disguise for what promises to be a sordid conservatism. Don't press us on the second stage of reform, he urged. One thing at a time. Let us create our nominated interim quango, though this must "be regarded as legiti-

mate", and its method of selection therefore modified. But, whatever then happened, the Lords "should exercise no more than its present powers". Its power "will remain unaltered". For it makes "an important contribution". It is "an essential part" of the legislature. His lordship said he could have extolled many more of the second chamber's virtues, except that this might imply that the first chamber "is not doing its job properly" — a charge, we're meant to smirkily understand, no peer would dare to level.

Such rolling unctuousness gives a taste of things to come. It was a catalogue of complacent fictions. The Lords, as presently powered, has very little function. Unless an election beckons, as in the rare case of the Police Bill last year, it has no leverage. It is not essential, or even important. Its work on Europe, touted as the peak of its scrutinising diligence, is, though competent enough, a nullity. Brussels, like Whitehall, offers a patronising glance and carries on regardless. The fabled expertise of the second chamber, though often impressive, is evacuated into the empty air admired by its exponents, greeted with mutual sycophancy, but of no importance to the nation. Or will the power, therefore, must come first. Are these evasions ever to be allowed to count? Will the Lords be made into a body the government is forced, on moderately rare occasions, to listen to? Or will the conspiracy of deluded rubbish peddled by Lord Richard, which says how wonderful the Lords is and always will be as long as it has a different class of member, continue to satisfy reformers?

Real reform would look something like this. The chamber would lose all its existing members, inherited and life. A new membership would be partly nominated, to meet the need for cross-bench expertise, but mostly elected, to supply minimal legitimacy. Both categories would be there for a fixed term, and the nominees could not have another. An electoral cycle would be constructed, with perhaps a third of the seats being vacated every three years of a nine-year term, to ensure a different pattern from the Commons. The new chamber, from which the designation "Lord" would disappear, would be more legitimate than now without being able to challenge the greater legitimacy of the Commons.

That is what the anti-reformers, among whom Lord Richard and Lord Irvine are evidently preparing to count themselves, depend on. It produces such puerilities as the latest offering from Demos, which says the legislative task is so serious that it should be handed to people chosen by lottery. The scheme outlined above, taken from what is still the most compact and rational reform proposal, by Jeremy Mitchell and Anne Davies (IPPR, 1993), is a more serious challenge to the claim, by Blair and Richard, that they want a Lords that is "more democratic and representative".

So far, they haven't tried. The opposite tendency, packing in the nominees, is well under way. The annual count of life peers has risen from eight in 1988 to no fewer than 91 in 1997. This caused no fuss. I haven't seen the number in print. More will follow this month, as the super-quango, shorn of the hitherto members, is readied for service. Its interim status defended by Lord Richard on the basis of a promise about the future which will acquire credibility only when some public shape is put on it. But that, in turn, depends on attitude. Is this new, reformed thing to be a theatre where clubmen posture and placemen are rewarded? Where accountability is a giant pretence, and revision merely a congenial performance? Or will it be designed to make government more careful, more apprehensive, and daily more intimate with the public interest? If not, the new second chamber will be an updated excrescence, worse than the old, and the best argument for hardening the public purse with only single-chamber government.

Lords reform is a subject replete with cranks and bores.

Busybody's charter

Ros Coward



LAST week the House of Commons was enveloped in a thick smog. Demos had called together various "parenting" groups for a new initiative on Family Learning. Such a summons from those with the ear of government clearly felt like a huge endorsement for this sector. They have long believed they know how to put right society's ills. For some of us, however, it raised alarming prospects of an army of do-gooders about to be unleashed on society.

Certainly this gathering confirmed that "parenting" is a career with cast iron prospects. By parenting I don't mean having a child and looking after it but a new so-called profession which runs courses and teaches parenting "skills". Fostered by this government's predilection for parenting as cause of and solution to most social problems, this sector faces continuous expansion. "Parenting" is at the heart of numerous government initiatives. Jean Corston MP is currently chairing an all-party parliamentary group on parenting; the Home Office has its own family and parenting group; David Blunkett never misses an opportunity to lug parents into the arena — currently they are fingered in the national year of reading, school/home agreements, and homework targets. "Parenting skills classes" are part of the punishment package for Jack Straw's assault on youth crime; and in Scotland a government initiative is already under way to teach parenting skills to schoolboys.

In a culture where any attempt to prop up the family, encourage marriage, or teach morality instantly fall foul of the unruly and chaotic ways in which most of us live, "parenting" must seem like a squeaky clean alternative. It's gender free, child-friendly and superficially not directed at any particular class. But don't be misled. This is a moral reform crusade. Ed Straw, Jack's brother, revealed its underlying ideology when launching another Demos pamphlet last month. A new national relationship and parenting service should have the "same commitment to social improvement as the Victorian drive for universal schooling".

THIS language of moral revivalism was echoed at the House of Commons last week: a national strategy for parenting would "promote important social objectives". Good parenting would lay foundations for "social responsibility and self-discipline".

Groups like the Parenting Education and Support Forum, the Parent Network, Parentlink, and Exploring Parenthood

are very effective within their existing limited objectives. They run courses which struggling parents find invaluable and operate help-lines. But as the likely source of expertise for new public initiatives they inspire dread. This area attracts a people with a mission to improve. Listening to their collective anguish over the cost to society of inadequate parenting it is impossible not to recall those busybody Victorian philanthropists determined to rescue the working classes from what they called "the promiscuous city".

And what precisely is on offer? Distilled down, the ideology of good parenting is quite simple — a mixture of common sense and insights from psychotherapy. The buzz words of positive parenting are boundaries, limit setting and affirmation. Bad parenting is inconsistent, unbundled, violent, inadequately supervised and focuses on the negative. This sounds fine but it is neither a universal panacea nor without problems. Anyone can learn the theory of positive parenting but few can live up to it. Like dieting, positive parenting can rapidly become just another failed good intention. There may not be anything wrong with the quality of a parent's love, however chaotic their parenting, and critical scrutiny is very undermining.

Some of us may also have encountered children raised to the letter of positive parenting — and what world class bores they are. These are the children whose parents pursue them with the requisite affirmative commentary. "Darling you are blowing your nose. It is a very loud blow. Now you are dropping your tissue on the floor. The floor is brown". The achievement-orientated then add the floor's measurements. Educational achievement, of course, is never far behind positive parenting. And thus, under, author of the pamphlet

An army of do-gooders to be unleashed on disorderly families

launched last week, is to be congratulated for merging both obsessions into a bizarre amalgam called Family Learning: "supporting parents as children's first and most enduring educators could do more to raise educational achievement than any other single measure".

The parenting lobby almost certainly emerged because of the vacuum created by the overthrow of patriarchal family authority. With the crumbling of that authority and its external embodiments — the church, the authoritarian school and the petulant classes — parents often find themselves in difficulty, looking for new ways of rearing children without resorting to heavy-handed discipline. Many families want to learn more, and want people they can turn to. But they don't necessarily want their individual and practical interest to authorise a new moral vanguard bent on reforming the disorderly families of the lower orders.

As big business tightens its grip on the food-chain, an unlikely opponent steps into the fray

Gene Prince

George Monbiot

THOSE of us who have been grumbling about genetically manipulated food for the past four or five years could be forgiven for occasionally succumbing to the sin of despair. While pressure groups have used every imaginable ruse to alert consumers and ministers to the hazards of the biotech companies' control of the food-chain, the Guardian was the only national newspaper consistently to have taken these dangers seriously.

This is a doubly difficult subject to cover, as it demands a degree of understanding of both economics and biology: most journalists were simply not prepared to tackle it. In the absence of concerted media scrutiny, the biotech companies seemed, until yesterday, to be winning almost every

battle they fought. Substantial public distrust had done little to obstruct their feverish progress towards the worldwide ownership of our most indispensable commodities. In just three years, for example, the biotech company Monsanto has secured 30 per cent of the American soya crop and 15 per cent of the maize crop. A series of gigantic acquisitions has culminated in its merger with American Home Products, to create a corporation worth \$60 billion, one of the largest firms on earth.

Such financial muscle enables the biotech companies to exert a remarkable degree of control over elected authorities. In the US, there's a regular exchange of personnel between Monsanto, the government's Food and Drug Administration and the Oval Office. The FDA has been described by campaigners as "Monsanto's Washington branch office".

In Europe, the highest lobby of parliament ever conducted persuaded MEPs to adopt a new directive granting the biotech firms exclusive rights over genetic material: patents. In other words, on life. When four British government conservation agencies, alarmed by

The company has got the debate it said it wanted. And it doesn't like it

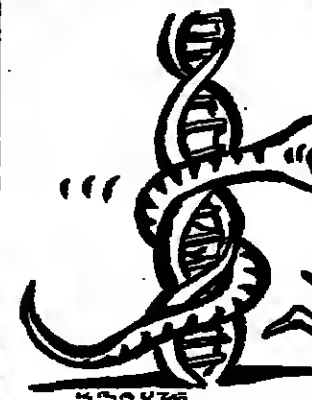
the potential ecological hazards of genetically engineered crops, called for a moratorium, Jeff Rooker, the agriculture minister, told them that there was nothing he could do. "I am not sure," he complained, "we are in the driving seat."

launch its £1 million advertising campaign last week, end, campaigners had the sinking feeling that the battle was all over bar the shouting. British people would continue to be fed genetically engineered food, whether we wanted it or not.

The Monsanto campaign is a masterpiece of Machiavellian subterfuge. Instead of simply trumpeting the virtues of its products, its advertisements claim that the company wants to stimulate a public debate on the issue, "to encourage a positive understanding of food biotechnology". What the adverts do not reveal is that this "debate" is purposeless. Monsanto's \$96 billion plan to conquer the world will go ahead whatever its respondents think. Having let the horse out, the company is inviting us to discuss whether or not the stable door should now be shut.

But today, its strategy

seems spectacularly to have misfired. In the Telegraph, Prince Charles took his call for debate at face value, writing: "We simply do not know the long-term consequences for human health and the wider environment... If something does go badly wrong we will be faced with



the problem of clearing up a kind of pollution which is self-perpetuating. I am not convinced that anyone has the first idea of how this could be done."

Suddenly, Monsanto has got the public debate it claimed it wanted. And it doesn't seem to like it at all.

For the past 24 hours, all leave for its spin doctors has been cancelled. The threats posed by genetic engineering are now being taken seriously by almost every news outlet in Britain. Monsanto's "debate" is no longer a pre-destined confrontation between the all-powerful and the utterly powerless, but (and it's said that in 1998 it takes royal intervention to achieve it) a genuine battle of wills.

This, of course, is only the beginning of the story. Monsanto has no shortage of resources for counter-spin. But now the biotech companies can no longer treat the Americans as a nation of co-opted dupes. Genetically-engineered food has become even less palatable than it was before.

George Monbiot last week received the One World National Press Award

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Goodbye Lords

Welcome to the Bleepies

THE GOOD news is that the hereditary peers have supplanted their last at the oldest gentlemen's club in the western world. The barons and earls whose ancestors either slept or bought their way into the aristocracy will soon lose their rights to sit and to vote in the House of Lords. They will no longer collect their daily cash stipends totalling £146 — just for turning up — nor determine the futures of the rest of us, simply because of an accident of birth. That much has just been made clear by the Government's Leader of the House.

At a London conference on the topic yesterday, Lord Richard declared that "the continuation of hereditary membership of the second chamber is not for negotiation". Such firmness of resolve deserves to be applauded. So, too, does much of the logic deployed by Lord Richard as he set out Labour's thinking on one of the most enduring questions of British politics, detailing the Government's strategy for solving a problem that has escaped so many of its predecessors. Nevertheless there remains room for doubt, even anxiety, in a key aspect of Labour's proposals for the Lords — and one does not have to be an old Tory backwoodsman to feel it. On the contrary, it is those who are most committed to democratic reform who have cause to feel twitchy.

On the simple issue of principle — the removal of the hereditary peers — there can be little rational disagreement. Lord Richard should be cheered for invoking the

too-often neglected spirit of Tom Paine, and quoting from The Rights of Man: "The idea of hereditary legislators is... as absurd as an hereditary mathematician, or an hereditary wise man; as absurd as an hereditary poet laureate." And that was in 1791. Two centuries later, Paine's logic remains incontestable. (And, despite Lord Richard's insistence to the contrary, that logic could doubtless be applied to the monarchy, too).

The obvious replacement for hereditary is democratic, direct election: selection by votes, not genes. Yet into this terrain Labour fears to tread: here Lord Richard's boldness begins to run dry. He is not proposing a simple, elected second chamber — not yet anyway. Instead the Government plans to remove the hereditaries by the autumn of 1999 — leaving an "interim" body solely made up of appointed life peers. Selection by blood is to be replaced with selection by party patronage. Not only is this wrong in principle, it smacks of dodgy politics. In time for the final stretch of its first term, the Government will have removed a troublesome source of resistance and replaced it with a room full of Labour placemen. Once the aristos have been kicked out, the House of Lords will have a Tory majority of 30 members. But that can be wiped out by Number Ten's rapid appointment of a new batch of life peers — some of them, perhaps, to be ennobled in the Queen's Birthday Honours list due out at the end of this week. Labour officials said yesterday that they would not seek to create their own majority, merely "rough parity" between the parties. That sounds fair enough. But it conceals the fact that a current focus of dissent — the unelected peers have dealt Labour 21 defeats already — would be swept away, to be replaced by a body much more comfortably on-message. No longer a home for eccentrics and maver-

icks, the upper chamber risks being tied umbilically to Millbank and its electronic pagers just as much as the loyal foot soldiers of the Commons. Goodbye to the House of Lords, welcome the House of Bleepies.

If this fear — of replacing one undemocratic institution with another — is the reason for Conservative opposition to Labour's reform plans, then William Hague and Lord Cranborne have a point. They are not out of line in demanding to know what the final shape of the second chamber will be before voting for radical change now: it's fair to ask what stage two will be before setting out on stage one. Labour promises the house of patronage is but an "interim" solution. Consultation will begin immediately to ensure "wider reform in the medium term".

Cynics shudder when they hear words like "interim" and "medium term". Progressives want to be assured that Labour won't grow rather comfortable with its reformed, aristocrat-free house of peers — where resistance will be neutered — but will rapidly follow through with the wholesale reform that is needed. Of course Labour is right to remove the hereditary peerage from the second chamber. Of course Lord Richard is right that "We need an Upper House that is more representative of the people of this country." But there is only one, simple way to achieve that outcome: democratic election.

Pension puzzle

Is a 50/50 split always right?

WHO could be against yesterday's proposals on the division of pension rights on divorce? For most couples, accumulated

pensions rights are their second most valuable asset. For many, they often exceed the value of their home. And yet on divorce, women have frequently been shut out from a fair share. Yesterday's draft bill, in the words of the Social Security Secretary, "recognises that women are more likely than men to be poor in retirement because it is harder for women to build up a decent pension in their own right. Many receive low pay, take breaks in their careers, or work part time, often because of their caring and domestic responsibilities." The biggest social revolution of the 20th century — lengthening retirement as life expectancy has increased by over 20 years over the century — has been accompanied by a growing scandal: ever widening inequality between pensioners. Over 19 million workers are building up pension funds, but research shows that men are four times more likely to have substantial pension rights on divorce than women.

So what's the problem? None in terms of principle. Everyone accepts that women deserve a better deal. There is only one small alarm bell ringing: no one must assume the detail does not matter. It does. Less than a decade ago all were in accord on another social reform: the child support agency (CSA). All were rightly agreed that women were not getting sufficient support from their former partners. Almost all believed it should be taken away from the courts and given to an administrative agency. And yet, despite this agreement on principles, the detail went terribly wrong.

Sensibly, ministers have learned from the CSA fiasco. There has already been extensive consultation before yesterday's proposals were published. Now there is to be further consultation on the draft legislation. The Commons select committee on social security has been invited to examine

the proposals before the bill begins its passage through Parliament to ensure the legislation, as drafted, reflects the policy goals, and even more important, whether what the policy-makers want is workable. There are some obvious issues for MPs to explore. For example while it is fair that pensions of people who marry at an early age should be shared on divorce, is a 50/50 split fair for people who marry late and then divorce? Is it right that the bill is restricted to married couples and does not apply to the increasing numbers of unmarried couples? Let debate begin.

A Stone's lament

Time is on whose side?

YOU Can't Always Get What You Want but I've Got The Blues. Shattered. My 19th Nervous Breakdown. I'm a Street Fighting Man, but it's Not Easy when you meet the Hand Of Fate. I Can't Get No Satisfaction from the Revenue and I tried, and I tried. Can't You Hear Me Knocking? Tell Me. This Is One Hit To The Body. All I asked was Gimme Shelter but with No Expectations of being left High and Dry. It's All Over Now. They're no longer Under My Thumb. This Could Be The Last Time unless Time is On My Side. They Paint It Black making out I'm some Jumpin Jack Flash. Dirty Work. Couldn't Sway them (I Can Almost Hear You Sigh).

Now I'm Between A Rock And A Hard Place. I'd be a Fool To Cry (As Tears Go By). So Get Off My Cloud. Such Mixed Emotions! I need Emotional Rescue. So Start Me Up. You Got The Silver. Why can't they have Sympathy For The Devil? I can't go Walking The Dog so Let It Bleed. Hell, It's Only Rock And Roll.

Letters to the Editor

Scots and sock fetishists

YOU gave 35 column inches to an ICM poll result which claimed that 52 per cent of those surveyed would vote in a referendum for an independent Scotland (Scots: We'll go it alone, June 6). But there was not a single line to another aspect of the same poll. Voting intentions for the Scottish Parliament were Labour 40 per cent, SNP 35 per cent. Jim Brunton, Edinburgh.

YOU imply that the Scots were unenthusiastic about the tax powers of the parliament; in fact they endorsed them by a margin of two to one. And you claim that the SNP relies on Tory votes; in fact, as the Scottish Election Survey shows, transfers between these parties are now fewer and less likely to happen than in any other pairing in Scottish politics. Lindsay Paterson, Edinburgh.

DAVID McKie need look no further than fellow columnist Nancy Banks Smith in his search for sock fetishists (But a sock in it, June 8). Nary a week goes by without the heavenly Nancy viewing something on the box which makes her "laugh her socks off". Come to that, even nearer home, his own article demonstrates what can only be called an over-heated — if not fervent — interest in the garment. Peter Bourne, Stamford, Lincs.

CAN we please have a proper news article or feature on the sock fetishists? Neither your original News Brief article, nor David McKie's whimsical column provide anything more than confusion when it comes to finding out what went on, why they did it, and why they were jailed for it. Is this another spinner case? Will Murray, West Linton.

YESTERDAY I heard a Radio 4 news headline stating that Britons and Ethiopians were meeting to discuss their differences. Wouldn't it make more sense if combatants met to discuss their similarities? Rob Harris, Stinchcombe, Glos.

Comic symbols of 'Ingerland' and Jimmy Hill in a tartan tie

IT MUST come as a relief to those who have been on the receiving end of far-right violence to know the Union Jack is now a "comic symbol" (Weekend, June 6). Bar owners across the continent are also rejoicing at the new cuddly Britpop image of the Union Jack-wearing hordes. If the Cross of St George has been "hijacked by the far right" it is because people like Alex James let them get away with it.

The Cross of St George appears on the England shirt and is carried by more and more England supporters. I shall continue to carry mine, not just as

Terminator's fatal touch

WAS one of the Africans invited to sign the Monsanto statement "let the harvest begin" (The African gene, June 4). One of the reasons I hesitated was that the names were to be published in major European papers: it has now become clear the aim was partly to persuade Europeans to accept biotechnology. If Africans accepted it as a great breakthrough for them, Britain would appear selfish to reject it. Africans are the producers and Europeans the consumers. "Particular concern to us is the fact that Monsanto now has acquired the Terminator technology. Many African farmers get their seeds from their governments. If governments co-operated with Monsanto and Kenyan farmers were given seeds which had the Terminator gene, farmers would only produce sterile seeds and would have to depend on the company forever. Woe to the citizens too poor to purchase seeds. They would surely starve."

One of the problems Africans face is that they do not have scientific information on the impact of biotechnology on their farming systems. Such high-level scientific data would only be disseminated to scientists in agricultural institutes. If the technology comes with a financial package for research, promotion and training it will be difficult for the poorly-financed African research institutions to decline to take the seeds and the technology to the trusting African farmers. Wangari Maathai, Co-ordinator, The Green Belt Movement, Nairobi, Kenya.

CAN we rely on Monsanto to sponsor their own debate on genetically modified organism technology with £1

million to provide a balanced picture? I would like to pose a few questions to the company spokesperson, Ann Foster (Letters, June 6).

If it all goes wrong (super-weeds, infectious sterility) can Monsanto afford to clean it up? Does your insurance cover such eventualities? If Monsanto is so confident with the safety of GM foods, could you not have marketed genetically modified soya bean crop as such?

In living organisms, genes may "jump" around and, as a result, ecosystems are complex beyond our dreams. So who can claim to understand the impact of GMOs on the environment? David Kershaw, Blackpool.

ANN Foster's letter is hardly persuasive that Monsanto's motivation goes beyond stark commercial gain. In India, thousands of farmers using genetically engineered seeds from Monsanto have been forced to change from their traditional practices and are now dependent on Monsanto for their supply of seeds and chemicals. They are forced to pay a "technical fee" to the company above the cost of the seeds and can be fined if they are caught using chemicals other than Monsanto's. Ellen Teague, London.

WHILE Monsanto berated the Guardian for failing to produce balanced information the first advertisement in the Weekend section, But Monsanto's eagerness to help the discussion did not extend to providing an accurate picture of their own interests in GE foods. Under the headline "We believe food should be grown

with less pesticide", Monsanto tried to inform the public that the main products include crops engineered to resist their pesticide Roundup (such as Roundup Ready soybean) and that as a result sales of Roundup have increased (Monsanto annual report). Dr Sue Mayes, Director, Greenpeace, Buxton, Derbs.

MORE often than not, feeding countries with large populations is about politics and economics. It is not about selling the products of GM seeds every year, which require Monsanto chemicals. Ann Foster did not address the ICM poll which said 50 per cent were not happy about the introduction of GM food or that 50 per cent said they should be kept separate. We live in a democratic society; we should have a choice. Lucinda Stanley, Liddington, Beds.

I AM amazed at the audacity of Monsanto's adverts. I am always ashamed of the poisoning and damage I see caused by these "civilised" companies in poorer countries. Is the tomato in the advert the next product they plan to force upon us? If they believe in less pesticide, why have they applied in New Zealand for a 200 per cent increase in allowed residues of the herbicide in their genetically modified soya bean? Katrina Holme, Skidmore, Lancs.

READING about Monsanto's Terminator seeds, I fail to see why the US government is harassing Microsoft — at least its web-engine works more than once. Guy Roukaerts, Sevenoaks, Kent.

In the frame

YOU chose the wrong town as an example (Nurse the screens, G2, June 5). Wolverhampton has an independent two-screen cinema, the Light House. We may not be one of the "super-indies" — are these the same as the "best independent"? — but we are providing a range of activities which extends from a degree in film studies with the University of

Wolverhampton to children's workshops and includes the showing of many films not available in the multiplexes. But we do not share the disdain for Hollywood and would welcome a debate about the changing nature of exhibition which would include asking whether "art-house" is a description of life-style or a definition of product.

Rather than "save the lives" of migrants from London, we are attempting to meet the

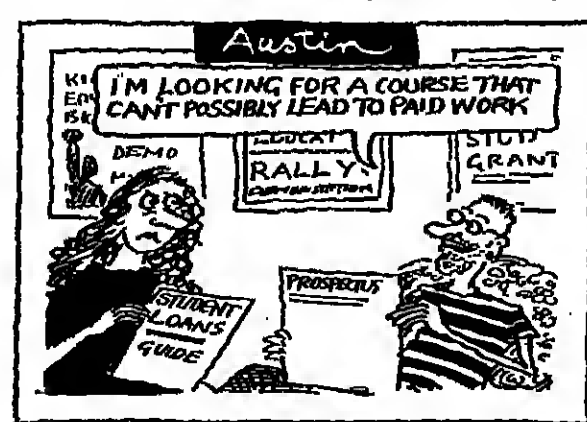
needs of diverse and multi-cultural communities by presenting first-run Indian movies, experimental work by regional artists, and hosting the next Deaf Film and TV Festival.

The Guardian could help to support centres like ours by taking a look at the full picture rather than always trying to identify the stars. Frank Challenger, Lighthouse Media Centre, Wolverhampton.

men I know are trade unionists, anti-racists and fed up with being characterised as mindless lager drinkers. Frank Consins, London.

IT is very difficult to separate Englishness from Britishness. The Scottish and Welsh are just as guilty of empire-building, trading in slaves and wearing clothes that "they are painfully unsure about" as the English.

I will be supporting England in the World Cup but will also be wishing Scotland well. As George Orwell wrote "a tendency to support the



News for the Home Secretary

JACK Straw (Letters, June 6) accuses Richard Norton Taylor (Kafka comes to the EU, June 4) of plugging "new deceptions of paranoia" and declares that "there is nothing secret" and "no unaccountable committees". On May 26, at the meeting of justice and home affairs ministers in Brussels, the Home Secretary was questioned on whether EU plans existed to create camps in Turkey to hold refugees and asylum seekers from which UNHCR would be expressly excluded.

He replied: "I have certainly never seen any papers on it... the question had never arisen." The Home Secretary clearly had no idea what the "unaccountable committees" under the Council of Ministers had been doing. On January 26 the General Affairs Council adopted the action plan on the influx of migrants from Iraq and the neighbouring region. This included the identification of "safe areas within the region of origin" in which migrants could be held and to which the EU could send "illegal immigrants".

Tony Bunyan, Editor, Statewatch bulletin, London.

News channel Street life

MATTHEW Engel (News from nowhere, June 6) should not fret that there is insufficient news to fill half-hour TV slots. Wider coverage of big stories on the home front of Europe is long overdue. Continental countries give their people British news; shouldn't we report on our neighbours? Anita Pollack MEE, London South West.

weaker side merely because it is weaker [is] almost general in England". Robert Steadman, London.

I WAS delighted with Nick Rider's letter (June 6) hoping the Brazilians hammer us on Wednesday. Such an attitude is far preferable to Jimmy Hill in a tartan tie. Tom Bartlett, Edinburgh.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

Hard feelings on left over old-fashioned labelling

YOUR item on the centre-left slate (Grassroots Alliance) for the forthcoming elections to the constituency section of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party is inaccurate in one very important respect (Skinner stands against Blairites, June 6). You have suggested that it is "hard left". This is not so. There is a hard-left component (the Labour Left Briefing) but not mind being termed as such, but there are also "soft left" and "mainstream" supporters — Labour Reform, for example, has a strong element of ex-Solidarity, social democratic and Labour Finance & Industry Group members in its ranks.

This is rather old-fashioned labelling. The general statement of the state clearly backs John Smith's one member one vote reforms and the alliance is a pluralist co-operative venture aimed at promoting a few simple and moderate proposals. One is that internal democracy within our party

needs to be strengthened, especially against the control freaks who are losing us Scotland and our inner cities.

We are not "anti-Blair", despite the spinning to do effect from our right-wing machine opponents. We are about issues, not personalities. Tim Peadar, Co-ordinator, Grassroots Alliance, London.

WHAT is it about the word "fiscal" since Labour won the election. Recently I have come across: fiscal prudence, fiscal rectitude, fiscal probity, fiscal tightening, fiscal elasticity, and — my favourite so far — fiscal flagellation. This obsession with things fiscal borders on the perverse. For the sake of fiscal decency, please encourage your staff to say No to all forms of fiscal temptation. Lawrence Kuglin, London.

The Country Diary is on Page 10.

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General Sani Abacha

A stubborn dictator

THE death of the Nigerian president General Sani Abacha, reportedly of a heart attack at the age of 54, elicited various reactions in his home country, a land he had ruled with unrelenting ruthlessness since he seized power in a palace coup on October 17, 1998. Many celebrated in the streets.

Some, especially those who benefited from the gargantuan corruption he instituted, mourned. All were shocked. Not because he died so "ordinarily", but on account of the suddenness of it all.

During the past year, rumours and newspaper reports on the poor state of his health never abated. The rumours were not helped by the reclusive nature of the dictator, who feared so much for his safety, and the tireless drawn and worn look he presented during the few occasions he ventured outside Aso Rock, the heavily fortified seat of government in the capital, Abuja.

Abacha was born in Kano, the leading commercial centre in northern Nigeria. His parents were of the Kanuri ethnic group, who inhabit the north-eastern part of the country. After primary school, he attended the provincial secondary school (now government college) in Kano, enlisting in the army soon afterwards. His military training was initially at the Nigerian Military Training College in Kaduna in 1962, after which he attended Mons Defence Cadet College at Aldershot in 1963.

Less than three years after Abacha was commissioned, Nigeria got its first military government, headed by General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi in January 1966. Six months later Abacha, then a lieutenant, was among the northern officers who carried out a counter coup in which Ironsi lost his life and General Yakubu Gowon became head of state.

Abacha fought on the federal side during the 30-month Biafran war and was reputed to be a brave soldier. Promoted to lieutenant-colonel in 1975, he became a brigadier five years later. It was in this rank, and as commander of the 9th Mechanised Brigade, that he came to national attention when on December 31, 1983 he announced the coup



He visited Nigeria with a brand of wickedness rarely seen in the annals of its history

of staff, the iron fist behind the military regime.

Abacha's day for the top job came in 1993 when Babangida annulled the presidential election won freely and fairly by Chief Moshood Abiola. Even though Abacha was one of those who engineered the annulment, he allowed Babangida to shoulder the blame alone and he was swept away by the unpopularity it generated.

An interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, a civilian lackey of Babangida's, took over but sacked two months later by Abacha himself. Abacha promised a sovereign

national conference when he took over power. He broke the promise. He promised that his tenure would be brief. He broke that promise too. Worst of all, he visited Nigeria with a brand of wickedness rarely encountered in the annals of Nigerian history. Abiola, who won the 1993 presidential election, was detained in 1994 and has remained in detention.

While he cooled his heels, assassins, suspected to be government-sponsored, killed his wife in the streets of Lagos. General Obasanjo, a former head of state, was jailed for "coup plotting" together with his deputy, General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who died in prison last December.

Leaders of oil workers who organised strikes in 1994 have remained in detention without trial. Opposition figures who escaped death and detention ended up in exile. In November 1995, Abacha caused international odium when he executed the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists.

What people found most difficult to understand was Abacha's stubbornness. Simply because President Nelson Mandela criticised the execution of Saro-Wiwa, Abacha prevented the Super Eagles, the country's soccer team, from defending their hard-won African championship in South Africa, thus earning a two-year ban from the Confederation of African Football (CAF). In March, Pope John Paul II visited Nigeria and gave Abacha a long list of whom he wanted released. Abacha simply ignored the list.

The most appalling thing about Abacha's leadership of Nigeria was his transition to the civil rule programme. He manufactured five political parties and had his cronies elected as their leaders. In April, all the parties "nominated" him the sole presidential candidate — which meant that had death not called, he would have been installed the "elected" president by October 1, 1998.

Abacha is survived by his wife and 10 children, the eldest, Ibrahim, a lawyer, having died in a plane crash in January 1996.

Chuks Hoegbunsum

Sani Abacha, soldier and politician, born September 20, 1943; died June 8, 1998



Bushwhacked... Fowley (left) makes his fury plain to Jean Hagen in *Singin' in the Rain*: 'We'll have to think of something else'

Douglas Fowley

The happiest rain in Hollywood

SOME actors were born to be stars and some were born to play character roles.

Douglas Fowley, who has died aged 86, was one of the latter. He had rather oleaginous looks, shifty eyes and the sort of moustache that only Clark Gable could get away with. He was the image of how Hollywood imagined petty con-men.

Western baddies and gangsters' henchmen to be, and, consequently, those were mostly given.

Yet, his most famous role was as the exasperated film director Roscoe Dexter in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).

Another of Fowley's rare comic roles was as the anchor at the beginning of *The Band Wagon* (1953) attempting to sell off the property of fading dancer Tony Hunter (Fred

Astaire), including his top hat and tails. "Five dollars... one dollar... fifty cents... Anything?" Fowley cries.

Born in the Bronx, Fowley moved to California in his late teens and studied at Los Angeles City College, before entering the movies in 1933. His first role was as a member of a gang of bootleggers under Spencer Tracy in *The Mad Game*, beginning as he would continue — on the wrong side of the law.

At 20th Century-Fox, he was content to have small roles in three Alice Faye musicals, and larger ones as rather too suspicious

murder suspects in *Charlie Chan on Broadway* (1937) and *Mr. Moto's Gamble* (1938). Then at Warners, he dropped up as a rustler in *Errol Flynn's* first Western, *Dodge City* (1939), and MGM put him into uniform

in *Stand By for Action* (1943). See *Here, Private Hargrove* (1944) and *Battle-ground* (1949).

Like so many other supporting actors, Fowley found more substantial roles on television and from 1955 to 1961 played Doc Holliday opposite Hugh O'Brian in *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*. Among his last films were *The Good Guys and the Bad Guys* (1969), in which he was a gentle, old hermit who brings lawmen George Kennedy and Robert Mitchum back to town to face a gang — and is killed for his trouble — and two unusual Charles Bronson movies: *From Noon till Three* (1976) and *The White Buffalo* (1977).

However, even after all these films, when people ask who Douglas Fowley might be, one has only to reply, the director in *Singin' in the Rain*, and

they'll know. In 1960, Fowley directed a low-budget

voodoo movie called *Macumba Love*. It starred serial actor Walter Reed as a writer who visits a South American island to unmask murderous practitioners of voodoo, only to find he's marked down as a victim. The film, which had the publicity line "Blood lusts of the voodoo queen! In flaming Eastman color!" also featured Jane Fonda, a Playboy centrefold.

One likes to imagine Douglas Fowley (he added the V later in his career) in the gear of Roscoe Dexter, on location in Brazil, exclaiming when something didn't work, "We'll have to think of something else!"

Ronald Bergen

Douglas Vincent Fowley, film and television actor, born May 30, 1911; died May 21, 1998

of staff, the iron fist behind the military regime.

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Sora Wainwright

In the Russia house

SORA WAINWRIGHT, who has died aged 76, was an artist and teacher who for more than 40 years with her Scottish husband, Willie, kept open house for visiting Russians and Yugoslavs. Her life was dramatic even before her birth.

Her pregnant mother had been snatched aboard one of the last ships to leave Odessa before the Bolsheviks took the city in 1921. Sora Balevich was born within an hour of docking in Glina, Yugoslavia and became the godchild of the Tsarist girls' school which had been evacuated from Petrograd to Yugoslavia. Sora was declared a "child genius in painting" by the headmaster, I. M. Suhorin.

Tolstoy's son-in-law, and chosen to train in icon painting under Pimen Maximovich Sotnikov, who had been in the Tsar's icon workshop. It was gruelling work which involved much fasting and praying but she graduated by painting two very beautiful

icons, which accompanied her for the rest of her life.

She studied fine art at Belgrade's Kolarchev University. Later interned in wartime Vienna, Sora was allowed the remarkable privilege of leaving the camp during the week to study architecture at the Technische Hochschule. She ended the war with her parents in a camp in the Austrian town of Linz.

There she met and soon married Willie Wainwright, a captain in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who had liberated the camp. She accompanied Willie to Belgium, India and France while he served with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. En route Sora, at ease with anybody, met Eleanor Roosevelt and Indira Gandhi among others.

In 1957, the Wainwrights moved to Nottingham with their two French-speaking children. Willie had become an accountant for the National Coal Board's pension fund. Sora meanwhile, aged 55, and already an established painter, with a whole slew of exhibitions behind

her, started teaching art but, lacking formal qualifications, decided to go back to university, graduating in Slavonic studies from Nottingham University.

She then embarked on her second, or perhaps third career, teaching Russian and imbuing her students with a real love of the language. When she officially retired, her class followed her to lessons in her own home. She worked as a technical translator for many leading companies and, even when confined to a wheelchair, continued to interpret for the local police.

Near the end of her life, a pupil tracked down one of Sora's Russian relatives, who had never left Russia. Much to Sora's joy, the relative was a Minsk telephone operator and long — and presumably — free conversations ensued.

Sora proved that one does not need to live in Russia to be a Russian. She is survived by three daughters, and a son.

Martyn Pollakoff

Sora Wainwright, artist and teacher, born July 1, 1921; died April 10, 1998

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: Looking back through my notebook, references to moths are very thin. The only one to achieve anything like its usual numbers in the light trap was the Early Grey, which was taken regularly from early March into May. It is one of the commonest moths in Cheshire, having been recorded in each of the 31 10km squares on which Ian Rutherford's *Macro-moths of Cheshire 1961-1993* was based. April broke all the rainfall records and this was a disaster for the emerging moths as well as the butterflies, which meant that May was almost a non-event.

There have been some brighter moments, such as the call I received recently to go and look at a "strange butterfly" that had appeared in a greenhouse in the village: it had a wing span of some three and a half inches and was, in fact, one of the hawk moths — the Poplar Hawk. Its grey-brown, sculptured wings were held in a distinctive posture, with hind wings pushed forward and the upper pair lying along its body. In this way it could cover the red patches on the hind wings, which would be quickly revealed when the insect was disturbed, and so momentarily alarm any would-be predator, giving the moth its chance to escape.

J. M. THOMPSON

of 10 in this category, not the published five. Apologies.

A REPORT on evidence to the BSE inquiry (page 11, June 5), should have said that cattle over 30 months old were barred from the human food chain two years ago, not under 30 months as stated.

THE amphibian and reptile specialist mentioned in an article on endangered wildlife (page 10, June 3) is employed by English Nature, not English Heritage as we stated.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 339 5289 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 339 5897. E-mail: readers@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

ALLEN, Doris Michael, born 20/10/1918, died peacefully at home on Friday 20 June 1998, aged 79. She was the wife of the late Michael Allen. She was a member of the Methodist Church. Burial at 11am on Saturday 27 June at 2 pm at St. Andrew's, Walsby. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire.

BRADSHAW, Rosetta Freda, died on June 21, 1998, aged 86. She was the wife of the late Fred Bradshaw. She was a member of the Methodist Church. Burial at 11am on Saturday 27 June at 2 pm at St. Andrew's, Walsby. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire.

OSCAR, John, peacefully on 20 June 1998, aged 86. He was the husband of the late Mary Oscar. He was a member of the Methodist Church. Burial at 11am on Saturday 27 June at 2 pm at St. Andrew's, Walsby. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire. Donations to Walsby Methodist Church, Walsby, Lincolnshire.

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Vodka and tonic but no kebabs as George Best adds his traditional spice to a feast of football



Jim White

TEDDY Sheringham, blonde in hand, beer on the table, cigarette in mouth and down in a night club: what an image to soften George Best's heart. To see that after all this time his

favoured manner of preparation — the Beattie work-out — was still being adhered to by top players despite all the rival claims made these days by mineral water and early nights. He must be proud. But George has not been impressed by Teddy.

"No I'm not," the old roué said with a twinkle. "See, I never smoked."

Best has been much in demand this week, his opinion on the nocturnal habits of the England party reckoned to be the most pertinent among the small army of ex-professionals now touting themselves as pundits and wits. It is somewhat unfair to cast him as an expert on all the Hod Squad's

peccadillos, of course. He was not one to be regularly caught on camera wearing a skirt. But what Beattie has to say on jeopardising it all for a crafty sharpened still carries resonance.

Certainly that is what more than 700 people, cramping into the South Bank's Queen Elizabeth Hall on Saturday afternoon, thought. They were all there as delegates to the Guardian-sponsored United Nations of Football, a day-long feast of music, theatre, dance, art and chat on the nature of the game. Hundreds of football enthusiasts were there. Which, if nothing else, proves we as a nation are now so obsessed with the

game we are prepared to give up an entire day to our passion even though there was not the slightest danger of seeing a ball kicked in anger.

Together with a session featuring George Weah, Best was the big draw of the day (somehow watching the Guardian team lose a football quiz did not quite compete). Such is the state of El Beattie's reputation these days it came as something of a shock to a number of those in his audience that he turned up, on time and considerably more sober than many a prominent member of the judiciary. Indeed, give or take a couple of dodgy moments when he mistook a very PC audience for a stag evening,

he was on sparkling form, a man at the peak of his, his second career: the one based on joking about how he messed up the first one.

True, there were a couple of familiar Beattie gags pulled from the greatest hits repertoire. He seemed very keen to tell us the one about a man on the way to the theatre asking him which would be better: to have done: scored a goal in the European Cup Final or slept with Miss World?

"I told him," said Best, timing as sharp as if he was in front of goal at the Stretford End once again. "I don't have to choose."

But there were also stories

not heard before, including a better about Denis Law.

Apparently in a game at Stamford Bridge, Peter Bonetti had fumbled a shot from Best and dived to pick up the rebound. As he lay panting on the ground, relieved, the ball in his hands, Bonetti looked up to see someone hovering over him, poised. It was Law. "I'll always be here," Law said.

MAINLY, though, we were interested in Best's opinion of the England party and their behaviour. Did he ever eat kebabs in his day? "Nah," he said. "Didn't taste so good with a vodka and tonic."

There was, however, no boozing solidarity with Gerza; he agreed with Glenn Hoddle's decision not to put him on the plane to France. In the cauldron of a modern World Cup, he reckoned, lack of fitness and pace is a liability. The only shame of Gerza's absence might be the loss to morale.

"He's a very bubbly character around a training camp," said Best. "He could help lift everyone."

If pulling down trousers, belching in faces and laying turds in the pool raises spirits, it has to be wondered how low morale is in the England set-up? On Sheringham's and Darren Anderton's alleged ca-

rousing last week, the old master blamed Hoddle. It was mad, he said, to let the players out of his sight at this moment. The Italians and the Germans, he said, lived like monks; Hoddle should make his players do the same. Which is an intriguing insight into the professional footballer's capacity to resist temptation for himself.

"Still, I'm looking forward to this World Cup," Best said. "I'll be the best ever. There are so many players to get excited about."

And where will he be watching? "At home, like the rest of the country," he said. "I'll get a few in."

England v South Africa: first Cornhill Test, final day

England see chance of a win washed away

Mike Selvey from Edgbaston on a sad end to a match that pointed to a fine finish

FOR once the pessimism of the forecasters was spot on and shortly before 2.30pm yesterday the first Test was abandoned as a draw.

The anticipated rain began to drip shortly before the scheduled start of play and the Brumbrella was cranked

over the ground, there to remain. Cricket was never an option and the captains agreed to call it a day and get away early to try to avoid potential hold-ups from the lorry drivers' industrial action.

We shall never know, but the chances are that England were deprived of victory just as they probably were by last-day rain in Bridgetown two matches ago. They have a new captain but luck in that regard does not appear to have changed.

Although there had been no official declaration it is probable that Alec Stewart would have pulled the plug on the England innings at their overnight 170 for eight, leaving South Africa to score 250 to win in a full day's play.

That does not sound many and it sounds even fewer when the loss of Darren Gough's cutting edge is taken into consideration. But for any side to chase around 300 runs on the last day of a Test is a tall order, and it becomes even more of an examination on a surface that was never less than capricious throughout and which was certain to get no better.

South Africa would have given it their best shot because as England and West Indies proved in Trinidad last winter, the unexpected can happen. But Hansie Cronje, South Africa's captain, confessed to being under no illusions: realistically a draw would have been the limit of their ambitions.

The game had been set up by the positive attitude of Stewart and his team when they batted for a second time on Sunday afternoon, and



Flaming June... or words to that effect, as the hopeful few waited in vain, huddled under their colourful umbrellas, for play to start yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: RUI VIEIRA

Final board

ENGLAND		SOUTH AFRICA	
M A Butcher c Kallis b Adams	77	G Krieger c Butcher b Cork	12
M A Atherton c Boucher b Donald	108	D P J Lisenberg c Sub b Cork	11
T A Stewart c Kallis b Adams	46	M A Atherton c Krieger	43
N Kline c Boucher b Adams	30	N Kline c Boucher b Adams	43
G P Thorpe b Pollock	10	T A Stewart c Donald	38
M R Rampersad b Donald	40	M R Rampersad c Kallis b Adams	7
A Ealham b Adams	2	M A Ealham c Pollock b Adams	7
D G Cork c Pollock b Donald	38	D G Cork c Boucher b Donald	10
R B Croft c Boucher b Donald	10	R B Croft c Boucher b Donald	10
D Gough not out	0	D Gough not out	0
A R Cresswell c Gough b Pollock	16	A R Cresswell c Gough b Pollock	16
Extras (10, 10, 10, 10, 10)	50	Extras (10, 10, 10, 10, 10)	50
Total (181 overs)	462	Total (181 overs)	462
Fall of wickets 77, 249, 308, 309, 325, 328, 411, 420, 427		Fall of wickets 12, 38, 119, 125, 191, 211, 224, 325	
Best bowling Donald 26-4-95-4; Pollock 40-10-30-4; Krieger 31-7-34-1; Cronje 11-3-29-0; Adams 42-10-53-3; Kallis 21-2-49-4; Fraser 22-6-28-1; Cork 27-5-36-0; Butcher 1-0-0-0.		Best bowling Fraser 24-6-103-4; Cork 22-2-49-4; Pollock 22-6-28-1; Cronje 27-5-36-0; Butcher 1-0-0-0.	

ENGLAND

M A Butcher c Pollock	11
M A Atherton c Krieger	43
N Kline c Boucher b Adams	43
T A Stewart c Donald	38
M R Rampersad c Kallis b Adams	7
M A Ealham c Pollock b Adams	7
D G Cork c Boucher b Donald	10
R B Croft c Boucher b Donald	10
D Gough not out	0
A R Cresswell c Gough b Pollock	16
Extras (10, 10, 10, 10, 10)	50
Total (181 overs)	462
Fall of wickets 11, 38, 119, 125, 191, 211, 224, 325	
Best bowling Fraser 24-6-103-4; Cork 22-2-49-4; Pollock 22-6-28-1; Cronje 27-5-36-0; Butcher 1-0-0-0.	

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INTERACTIVE

Stewart on the front foot in declaration of intent

David Hopps on a ray of sunshine amid the Edgbaston gloom as the new England captain points to an attacking approach

ALEC STEWART left a bedraggled Edgbaston yesterday content at least that he had been presented with an instant opportunity to emphasise the team ethic that he regards as essential to the success of his England captaincy.

England's vigorous second-innings batting, as they chased an overnight declaration, was a refreshing approach that has immediately placed Stewart's leadership in a positive light and emphasised his authority over a dressing-room happy to respond to his demands.

"Everyone was prepared to risk getting out for the sake of the team," Stewart said. "The idea was to get enough runs by the close and give ourselves all the final day to bowl South

Africa out. We told everybody that if they failed it wouldn't be held against them in selection."

The ability to disregard personal objectives for the good of the team whenever necessary might be regarded as a fundamental cricketing principle that invariably should have been cultivated since childhood.

Lamentably, though, the pressures of modern Test cricket ensure that no country can assume that this is the case. Long-term personal aspirations, insecurities, media criticism and financial considerations can occasionally tempt even the most team-oriented player into an excessive regard for his own self-preservation.

Stewart set the tone and, as a new captain, he had

the greater security to do so, he briefly adventurous in his character. He has always been one to lead from the front.

He confirmed that England had declared overnight even though their lead of 289, although imposing, was not invulnerable. "I didn't think that South Africa would score 250," Stewart said. "And if they had, good luck to them."

The handover of the England captaincy has been a seamless transition. Michael Atherton, who finished the tour of the West Indies careworn and exhausted, returned to the ranks in such sprightly fashion that he was named man of the match. The only drawback for Atherton was that his performances were

committed him to two more media conferences in the space of three days when he had vowed to give them up for life.

Hansie Cronje, South Africa's captain, envisaged his side's own chances of "snaking a win" had ratcheted up on the final day, but his chief concern surrounded the form of his new-ball pair Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock.

Both Donald and Pollock consistently failed to make use of encouraging conditions and their lack of rhythm was even more marked considering that both have gained substantial experience of Edgbaston while playing for Warwickshire.

South Africa's plan to rest Donald and Pollock in between Tests has been abandoned until they rediscover something approaching their best form. Both are likely to play against Sussex at Hove in the three-day game beginning on Fri-

day. "They just need a good work-out," Cronje said. "They are world-class bowlers and they will be back."

Warwickshire's own de-briefing will dwell upon the

crowd-control problems which resulted in a record number of people being ejected — more than 100 over the four days — and complaints from several of their own regular stewards about heavy-handed behaviour from the Manchester security firm Ned Kelly's, who were brought in as reinforcements.

One elderly dressing-room steward complained of being manhandled as he walked on to the outfield to deliver a message to the South African Brian McMillan.

The Rea Bank stand was particularly unruly. Praised a year ago by the England team for their colourful and uplifting support during the Test victory against Australia, they have since degenerated markedly. Several mind-numbing banes were passed on Sunday offering morose, drunken chants in praise of a blow-up, plastic dinosaur (Dino from The

Flintstones, apparently), and one did not need to be a dinosaur to become heartily sick off it.

Much of the next week will be occupied by the International Cricket Council's annual meeting at Lord's, with the adoption of a Test world championship central to the agenda.

David Richards, the ICC's chief executive, would not expand upon proposals considered over the past year by a working party but suggested: "Test cricket needs to have a focus and we feel that we have a package that can give the game a boost."

Experimental forms of cricket intended to appeal to a younger audience are also much in vogue, and there will be an undertaking to amalgamate two games that have evolved in the southern hemisphere: Cricket Max, the brainchild of the former New Zealand captain Martin Crowe, and the Super 8 game being promoted in Australia.



Stewart... positive start

Racing

Graham Rock on a young trainer with a first-class pedigree who has a fine chance of landing the big York sprint this weekend

Prevalence geared up to strike it rich

ESTABLISHING a reputation in your first year is often crucial to young trainers.

Jeremy Noseda has not set racing alight in the early weeks of the new season, unsurprisingly because the majority of his team are two-year-olds, but he has achieved the excellent strike rate of eight winners from his 26 runners, and he is looking forward to running Prevalence in the six-furlong William Hill Trophy at York on Saturday.

With widespread rain forecast until towards the end of the week, the ground on the Knavesmire is likely to ride soft and no chances, installing Prevalence as the 7-1 favourite.

One of the leading members of the Godolphin team before striking out on his own, Noseda is a shrewd judge of a horse, and apparently he had every confidence that Prevalence would win his last race, a competitive handicap over seven furlongs at Kempton.

Bookmakers, wary of the trainer's reputation, opened Prevalence at a mispriced 9-1 in the 17-runner field, but the spoiling tactic did not deter connections.

In one of the gambles of the season, Prevalence was backed down to 4-6, including a dozen four-figure bets. His supporters had barely a moment's anxiety as Walter Swinburn landed Noseda's improving colt the winner by a comfortable neck.

The handicapper, too, was impressed, and raised Prevalence 5lb for his win, but after sending out Ireland, Hero to win at Pontefract yesterday, Noseda was hopeful of his horse's chance.

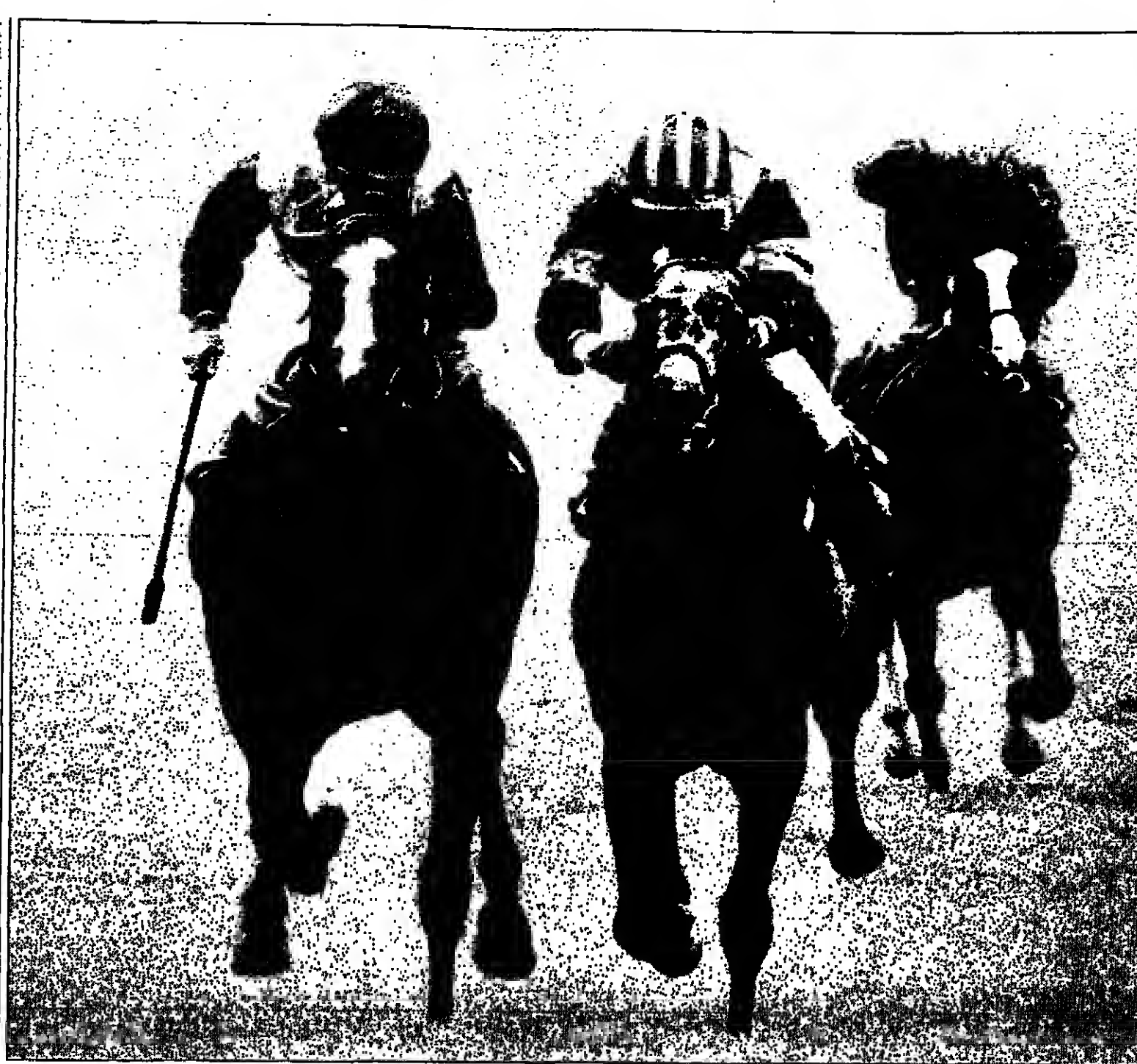
"All being well he goes to York. I don't think soft ground would worry him, he has run well on it in the past," he said. "In fact, he is reverting to six furlongs after having won over seven, so if the going is on the easy side, it might take the edge off the speed horses."

One trainer who is wary of testing going is Roger Charlton, who has declared his Newmarket winner Magic Rainbow—who is 5-1 second favourite—at the five-day stage.

"He wouldn't want the ground too soft," said the Godolphin trainer. "He is a good actioned, top-of-the-ground horse. I hope he will run and that Kieren Fallon will be able to ride him again."

"He has gone up 5lb, though, and we will be off with the third, fourth and fifth horses at Newmarket."

The 500,000 handicap for three-year-olds, won by Noseda's such-to-look-for sprinter as Cadeaux Genereux (the sire of Prevalence) and Sheikh Alhadou, has attracted 36 entries, including



Trump card... Pat Eddery gets up close home to score on Green Card (left) at Nottingham yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE SHELTON

Richard Fahey's Eastern Purple (4-1), who won the Sandy Lane Stakes at Haydock by an impressive eight lengths. "He's taken a big hike in the weights, up 12lb, and we'll find out how good he is," said the trainer.

Lynda Ramsden, who has declared both Nuclear Debate (9-1) and Torrent (16-1) for the big sprint, trained Halmanor last season, but sold the horse to Graham McCourt.

In his four races this season Halmanor (2.45) has shown that he has retained some of his ability and he has

a good chance to land a second victory for his new owners in the Booker Catering Equipment Claiming Handicap at Salisbury today. Halmanor needs to be on his best to beat a late burst. He won at Brighton first time out this season and was given too much to do next time.

His following outing was at Folkestone, where he appeared to be a shade unlucky when runner-up to Irrepressible.

In a race which favoured the front-runners, he stumbled on the home turn when

making progress from the rear, yet was beaten only a head. He hit the front too soon in his latest run on the all-weather at Wolverhampton last Saturday when third, Over The Moon and Richard Quinn has the task of producing him in the dying strides of the race.

Jazznic was unlucky on her most recent outing, Peter Mackin's filly made her debut at the last week's Maiden Auction Stakes.

She took a little time to realise what was required of her, but had begun to im-

prove when the runner-up, Cartmel Park, swerved violently to the right and Darryl Holland was forced to snatch up Jazznic just as she was beginning to progress.

Providing she has recovered from the experience, Jazznic (2.15) can make amends in the first division of the Eddie Reavey Maiden Auction Fillies' Stakes.

Classic Manoeuvre (4.15) could be the value bet in the 12-15 year-old fillies' race. Still a maiden, Richard Han-

non's colt has form similar to his rivals, and was not disgraced when fourth to Legal Lunch on his reappearance at Haydock last month.

There is a suspicion that he is suited by some cut in the ground, and with rain forecast, he could find underfoot conditions in his favour.

Indian Missile has run well in all three of his races this season and finished runner-up to Colville at Warwick last Wednesday, while Groom's Gordon would go close if recapturing his best form of last year. However, Richard Hughes rides Classic Manoeuvre for the first time, and his mount has an excel-

Classy Forante has Royal Ascot in her sights

Ken Oliver

FORANTE could be aimed at Royal Ascot after making an impressive debut at Nottingham yesterday.

Ringer Charlton's filly had been showing up well in home sprints and, despite opposed by a useful looking field for the Juvenile Maiden, was the only runner seriously backed.

It was one-way traffic to the bookmakers with Forante backed to win more than £15,000 in major bets and new money from her supporters an anxious moment.

Smartly out of the stalls, she was always in command and cruised home for an easy three-length victory under Tim Sprake.

Charlton was not on hand, but watched the race on television at home and said: "I'm really delighted with her. She showed bags of speed and did it really well."

"I'm not ruling out Royal Ascot as the entries have not closed there yet, but it is only next week and it could be too close."

"However, she did not appear to have a hard race and so the Royal meeting is still a possibility. We will see how she is when she gets home."

Charlton has 30 juveniles in his Bechampton yard and has now won with two of the four youngsters to have run.

Pat Eddery produced a vintage ride on Green Card to beat Frankie Dettori on West-A-Minute in a tremendous finish to the Holmes Stakes at Epsom.

Dettori looked to be on the winner as he sent his mount on from the hot favourite Golden Dice at the two-furlong marker, but Eddery brought his horse to the front inside the final furlong.

Eddery lifted his mount into the lead right on the



Charlton... wait and see

line to prevail by a head, much to the delight of winning trainer Sean Woods. The Newmarket handler said: "That's a relief. He deserved to win that race because he has some good form, but he has been asked to take on some pretty difficult tasks at times."

"Pat said that a mile suited him very well so now we'll look for a Listed or a Group race abroad for him."

"That's nine winners for us this time round from about 80 runners, but a lot of them have been in the frame and we have had 22 seconds."

Charlton and Eddery teamed up with Mustique in the Stanton By Dales Fillies' to complete their respective debuts.

The filly, who started at 12-1, ran on too strongly for Sahara to score by one length. Charlton's assistant Tom Grantham said: "Our horses have really hit form in the last week or so since Harewood won at Lingfield. They are really running well now."

Dettori got on the score sheet when Sadler's Blaze, who was backed from 5-1 down to 3-1, justified favouritism in the Woodhouse Handicap—collaring another well-backed runner Spa Lane in the last 100 yards to win by a neck.

Amin gets hit by the pound

RETURN OF AMIN swept back to winning form in good style in the Tavern Group Handicap at Pontefract yesterday, but James Bethell, the colt's trainer, is worried that £300 may cost him a higher price in the Wokingham Stakes at Royal Ascot.

The winner was brought with a well-timed run by apprentice Paul Pessey, who was gaining his 15th success of the season.

The young rider has now had 94 winners in all and needs only one more success

before losing the right to claim an allowance. Bethell had been left with little option but to give the four-year-old his pre-Royal Ascot test, but said with a wry smile: "He has got a bit in the Wokingham and we had him to get a 5lb penalty to guarantee him getting a run."

"That would have been the case had the penalty value of this race been under £7,500, but unfortunately it is £300, but unfortunately it is £300, but unfortunately it is £300."

The difference between victory and defeat."

Salisbury Jackpot card with guide to the form

GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
2.15 Jazznic (9-1)	Jazznic
2.45 Eastern Purple (4-1)	Eastern Purple
3.15 Halmanor (2-1)	Halmanor
3.45 Jazznic (9-1)	Jazznic
4.15 Jazznic (9-1)	Jazznic
4.45 Jazznic (9-1)	Jazznic
5.15 Jazznic (9-1)	Jazznic

Highly-rated top card for races of 11m plus. Run-in of 71 forms part of nearly straight mile. Drums: Good. Good to Soft in places. * Donors: blunders. * Top form ratings. Drums: Good. Good to Soft in places. * Donors: blunders. * Top form ratings. Drums: Good. Good to Soft in places. * Donors: blunders. * Top form ratings.

Blunders: 3.15 Eastern Purple; 3.45 Jazznic; 4.15 Jazznic; 4.45 Jazznic; 5.15 Jazznic.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J. James

2.15 EDDIE REAVEY MAIDEN AUCTION FILLIES' STAKES 2YO (10v 1)

14v 1	15v 1	16v 1	17v 1	18v 1	19v 1	20v 1	21v 1	22v 1	23v 1	24v 1	25v 1	26v 1	27v 1	28v 1	29v 1	30v 1	31v 1	32v 1	33v 1	34v 1	35v 1	36v 1	37v 1	38v 1	39v 1	40v 1	41v 1	42v 1	43v 1	44v 1	45v 1	46v 1	47v 1	48v 1	49v 1	50v 1	51v 1	52v 1	53v 1	54v 1	55v 1	56v 1	57v 1	58v 1	59v 1	60v 1	61v 1	62v 1	63v 1	64v 1	65v 1	66v 1	67v 1	68v 1	69v 1	70v 1	71v 1	72v 1	73v 1	74v 1	75v 1	76v 1	77v 1	78v 1	79v 1	80v 1	81v 1	82v 1	83v 1	84v 1	85v 1	86v 1	87v 1	88v 1	89v 1	90v 1	91v 1	92v 1	93v 1	94v 1	95v 1	96v 1	97v 1	98v 1	99v 1	100v 1
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France 98 Aces and wild cards

Batigol provides the beef

Led by the prolific Fiorentina striker, Argentina have the look of champions. Paddy Agnew reports

GABRIEL Batistuta turned up at an abattoir near Florence for a promotional shoot recently. One of his sponsors had come up with an idea linking him with the product for which his country is famous — beef. A television crew had been flown in from London and journalists from the world's news agencies were there.

All was set fair until Batistuta's agent arrived. He pointed out that his client had a contract to promote Argentinian beef and could not be seen doing the same for the Italian variety. What the sponsor did not point out was that the 29-year-old Batistuta is a serious beef farmer in his own right. Along with his father Omar, he owns and runs "Batistuta and Batistuta", an

18,000-acre ranch about 60 miles west of his native Reconquista in Argentina.

Beef is what Batistuta provides for Argentina. He is the classic team leader, an inspirational figure who lives up to the maxim that "the tough get going when the going gets tough". For seven seasons he has been the best thing Fiorentina have had going for them. As club owners and coaches have come and gone, and while they suffered the indignity of being relegated to Serie B for the first time in 54 years in 1993, Batistuta played on and kept scoring goals — 123 in the league to be precise.

To Fiorentina's fans he is simply Batigol and his folk-hero status was confirmed by the erection of a temporary statue of him in 1996 when the Serie A club won the Italian Cup. His striking talents have many admirers, including Manchester United's manager

serella was talking about the need to construct the World Cup team around young home-based talent. When he arrived in St Etienne this week, his squad included only five members who play in Argentina.

Passarella tried to get by with native talent but during the nine-country round-robin Latin American qualifiers he learnt that there was no substitute for experience. Defeats by Bolivia and Ecuador suggested it was time to bring back the European contingent.

Italian football has its fair share of Argentinians. Players such as Roberto Ayala (Napoli), Jose Chamot (Lazio) and Nestor Sensi (Parma) are simply Batigol and his folk-hero status was confirmed by the erection of a temporary statue of him in 1996 when the Serie A club won the Italian Cup. His striking talents have many admirers, including Manchester United's manager

Ortega and Claudio Lopez and this is a formidable looking squad.

The recall of Batistuta, in particular, represented a major change of mood by Passarella, who had seemed less than enthusiastic about the Fiorentina striker. Passarella is as determined and strong-

will as a coach as he was a player — remember he was the hard-tackling, hard-shooting libero who led Argentina to World Cup glory in 1978, while his club career saw some memorable seasons with Fiorentina and Inter.

Passarella's success as a player and as a coach (he won the championship with River Plate) has meant that he has never hesitated to cross swords with Argentina's famous footballing sons. As a player, he did not see eye to eye with Maradona

(their differences of opinion were widely believed to have provoked a last-minute withdrawal by Passarella from the Argentina squad which won the World Cup in 1986).

He is a stickler for discipline and even told the Real Madrid midfielder Fernando Redondo to get his hair cut. That may explain why Redondo has refused to play for Argentina and will, consequently, be watching the World Cup on television.

Redondo's absence, chronic doubts about the No. 1 goal-keeper Carlos Roa of Malorca concerns for the fitness of Almeyda and Chamot and anxieties about the temperament of Ortega, the man destined to partner Batistuta, may currently cast some shadows over Argentina's preparations.

Yet, unlike famous rivals such as Brazil and Italy, they have at least been showing good form in recent friendlies. Since losing 2-1 to Israel in April, Argentina have won five successive matches including a 1-0 victory against their old rivals Brazil in Rio.

In a recent 5-0 victory over Bosnia in Buenos Aires, Batistuta scored a hat-trick to confirm his position as Argentina's leading scorer of all time with 41 goals to his credit (Maradona ended his career with 33).

All in all, Argentina are looking good.

Those who thought that there was at least one recognisable Japanese player, the striker Kazuyoshi Miura who had a season with Genoa four years ago, can think again. The 31-year-old Miura is not in the squad, which may indicate that Japan will only be making up the numbers on their World Cup finals debut.

Their qualification by a 118th-minute golden goal in a play-off with Iran probably prompted huge sighs of relief at Fifa because Japan are joint hosts for the next World Cup.

The Japanese may make life hard for their opponents. Their team boasts the talents of the Brazilian-born Wagner Lopes and Japan's latest rising star Hidetoshi Nakata. They are a hard-working side as they showed in the 1-0 defeat by Venezuela at the weekend, but that is unlikely to be enough against experienced opponents.

Like Japan and Croatia, Jamaica are appearing in a World Cup final for the first time. They are unlikely to progress beyond the first round, but the Reggae Boyz and their cheerleaders are likely to win a lot of friends because of their attitude.

Their road to France was a long one. They played 20 matches and qualification was only secured by a 3-0 draw against Mexico.

Their team is a mixture of indigenous talent and English-based players including Frankie Stander (Cheltenham), Robbie Earle and Marcus Gayle (Walsley), Shyne Stanger and Paul Hall (Portsmouth), Dean Burton and Darryl Powell (Derby).

Burton has been referred to in the Italian media as "The Ronaldo of the Caribbean". However, the description owes more to Burton's looks than to his playing resemblance to the Brazilian.

Germany suffered injury (illness scares less than 24 hours after arriving in France).

Their wing-back Christian Ziege was unable to train because of a fever and the defensive midfielder Thomas Helmer had a thigh problem and missed training following their arrival in southern France.

The Germans do not play their opening match until next week when they face the United States in Paris on June 15. With the average age of the squad nearly 30, the coach Bert Vogts knows that his veteran players take longer to get over injuries. Helmer is 33.

"It's a real shame for Helmer because he has been mentally in good form and feeling positive," Vogts said. "I hope he is going to get back soon. I hope he will be able to do some light training later today. On June 15, we will leave it to the doctors to decide when he can return."

Vogts praised conditions in France and said he was very happy with the training pitch at the Parc des Sports on the outskirts of Nice. The Germans are staying in a quiet village in the hills outside the city

where there are no distractions. "The conditions are perfect — we are ready to get started," said Vogts.

Alessandro Del Piero skipped Italy's practice match in Senlis, France, last night, a sign that the Juventus forward is unlikely to face Chile on Thursday. He is still recovering from an adductor muscle injury he picked up in last month's European Cup final defeat against Real Madrid.

Del Piero's place up front is now almost certain to go to Roberto Baggio, partner of Alessandro Del Piero in the Group B tie in Bordeaux.

A bruised heel kept South Africa's captain Lucas Radebe out of Bafana Bafana's first World Cup practice in France, but their coach Philippe Troussier believes the Leeds United defender will play in Friday's opening match against France.

Michel Platini, who captained France to the 1982 and 1986 World Cup semi-finals, believes his country can lift the trophy this time. "We're not the big favourites but I think we can win it," Platini, the chairman of the French organising committee, said.

Between football watching, drinking, shopping and cinema going, will anyone actually be working? Neither the Confederation of British Industry nor the National Statistical Office can come up with figures from previous footballing extravaganzas, and Britain's economic prospects will be helped by the fact that some of the games will be played in the evenings. Still, employers should expect more people to report in "sick" as the two home countries progress and find themselves playing matches during normal working hours. There could be a few late lunches, too, come the 1.30 pm kick-offs.

Spare a thought for those poor chaps at the National Grid's control centre. They watch every game with hawk-like attention, ready to summon power stations into action at a moment's notice when the demand for power surges as games end and a nation rises as one from its seats in order to brew up, indeed, the biggest demand ever recorded in the United Kingdom followed the England v Germany game back in 1990. Penalty shoot-outs can play havoc with their calculations. One or two England managers know the feeling.

National Lottery tickets drop during the World Cup.

Britain's high streets will also be affected — despite the prospect of World Cup "widows" seeking consolation from a surfeit of soccer in shopping.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing reckons that retail sales could fall by one per cent in June and July.

"Even though most of the key matches for England and Scotland in the preliminary rounds are midweek, many of us will be distracted by the progress of our football heroes, forcing high street shopping 'offside'," according to the CIM's marketing director Ray Perry. Some of those whose revenues are in the firing line are not taking the challenge lying down. For example, the cinema company UCI is launching a nationwide "Hollywood hunks" series in a bid to attract two viewers, promising "heart-throb action" and "one knee-trembling blockbuster after another". However, it is not carrying the marketing aggression too far. Screening times will not be in competition with England or Scotland games and discounts are on offer, which is rather like playing one up front and five across the midfield.

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Croatia
Last two matches: 1-0 vs Slovenia, 1-0 vs Slovenia.
Group schedule: Croatia vs Slovenia, Croatia vs Slovenia, Croatia vs Slovenia.
All section have Cup twice in three weeks. Croatia have been in the top three in all three group games. Croatia have been in the top three in all three group games. Croatia have been in the top three in all three group games.

John Duncan in Paris on why the election of Sepp Blatter as new Fifa president is good news for home hopes

England well clear of Germany in battle to stage World Cup

THE chances of the World Cup being staged by England in 2006 received a huge boost yesterday when the Swiss Sepp Blatter was elected Fifa president by 111 votes to 80. His opponent Lennart Johansson, who had backed the German bid and was accused by some of being a German "puppet", conceded defeat after one ballot.

"Any German bid for 2006 is dead in the water," said one Fifa source and that was a message which the Football Association bid team were happy to encourage.

It was a disastrous day for the Germans. Not only did they lose Johansson but an amendment they were seeking to prevent any country putting forward more than one candidate failed by 58 votes.

This comes on top of the Germans losing their place on the Fifa executive in Dublin last month to a Maltese candidate. "It certainly hasn't been a great day for them," said Alec McGivern, the head of England's 2006 bid.

"If the World Cup is coming to Europe in 2006 it is coming to England. We really believe that. A year ago we were told we would not even be allowed to put ourselves forward. Now we are the leading European candidate and we believe the best in the world."

The FA has good grounds for optimism. Although Blatter has said he believes the tournament should go to South Africa in 2006, the FA privately feels that this was electioneering and that once the organisational headaches of the World Cup become apparent over the next month,

few will want to take a risk on the only African candidate in the ring.

One African Fifa delegate yesterday admitted to the congress that no African country could host the tournament alone.

Every organisational cock-up in France 98 will increase the chances of the tournament going to England in 2006, and will strengthen the belief that South Africa still does not possess the infrastructure to host a competition as big as the World Cup. A host-free tournament would similarly boost England's bid.

The vote shows that anti-German feeling in Fifa runs high with Johansson suffering from the negative perception of the Germans and the way they dominate the way the World Cup become apparent over the next month,

Johansson is president. Blatter, formerly general secretary of Fifa, is said to be furious with Germany for the manner in which they backed his opponent and he may seek to make the 2006 decision the first course of his revenge.

However the defeat of Johansson will not be welcomed by Premiership clubs, who had expressed private annoyance at the FA decision to back Blatter. They feel that Johansson, an Anglophile and Arsenal fan who personally organised the return of English clubs into Europe after the Heysel ban, has been stabbed in the back by the FA.

They fear that the Swede, who remains as Uefa president, will make them pay and that his influence on the further development of the lucrative European club competitions has been harmed.



The big three... Havelange, left, Johansson and Blatter

ter Tony Banks said yesterday: "I congratulate Sepp Blatter on his victory and look forward to meeting Mr Blatter with the Football Association to talk about the 2006 World Cup bid and other footballing issues."

For Blatter the election is the result of 17 years work within Fifa, which he joined after Havelange saw him working as chief timekeeper and public relations officer for the Swiss watchmaker Longines. His fluency in five languages and his charisma convinced the Fifa delegates during a three-month whirlwind of international visits that he was the man for the job.

Blatter, apart from presenting himself as the candidate of continuity, repeatedly pledged on the campaign trail to increase women's representation on Fifa's executive committee. Now he has the chance to change the world.

Kendall neck still on block

Ian Ross

HOWARD KENDALL still behind his desk this morning nervously awaiting the telephone call that will officially signal the end of his tenure at Everton. The most successful manager in the Merseyside club's history reported for work yesterday morning insisting he knew nothing about what would seem to be his imminent departure from Goodison Park.

"I have heard all the speculation but, quite frankly, that has been doing the rounds for the best part of a month," Kendall said. "I shall simply carry on with my duties. I will, however, be seeking talks with my chairman."

Everton's chairman Peter Johnson is thought to have decided at the weekend that a change of manager would be in Everton's best interests. As Kendall awaited news of his fate the man who will probably replace him, Martin O'Neill, agreed to have yet more talks with Leicester City.

Although O'Neill is still likely to resign his post within the next few days he is continuing to push the olive branch of reconciliation across the boardroom table yesterday.

O'Neill flew out to France last night as part of the BBC's World Cup commentary team, but only after announcing he was happy to return home at any time for another round of negotiations with the chairman of Leicester's plc arm, Sir Rodney Walker.

"I do not want this to drag on but I do want a final decision and, if need be, I will come back from France as soon as a meeting is arranged," O'Neill said, after unsuccessfully trying to arrange a meeting with his employers on Sunday.

Sir Rodney insisted that the recent restructuring of upper and middle management at the Filbert Street club had been revised in the hope of allaying O'Neill's fear of a possible diminishing of his authority.

"We have talked over the weekend about some of his anxieties which are longstanding and really have little to do with recent changes here."

Martin has shared with me the full extent of how he feels about some of the issues relating to his last days at this club," Sir Rodney said.

If O'Neill does decide to remain with Leicester, Everton may seek to install Manchester United's assistant manager Brian Kidd as Kendall's successor.

France 98 The countdown to kick-off



Fire practice... Scholes at training yesterday

Scholes shies at success

Martin Thorpe

PEOPLE are talking about Paul Scholes as the new Paul Gascoigne. But though the football fits, a more opposite personality one could not imagine.

Oh, if only Gascoigne could answer the question "How do you like to relax?" with the words "By doing nothing really" - or could openly admit "I just don't like being in the limelight".

But this is the other Paul, the red-topped Red Devil who, though Gascoigne was his hero as a youngster, shies away from most things apart from football.

Scholes's emergence into the public consciousness as a player of superstar potential accompanied his performance during Le Tournoi last summer. The problem is that the Manchester United forward

Stars in their eyes

What the future holds on planet football

A horoscope-style chart for football players. It features zodiac signs and corresponding player names with brief descriptions of their personalities and career prospects.

- ARIES**: Teddy Sheringham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 12, 1965)
- LEO**: Alan Shearer. "He'll be on good form in the first few matches but he's got to be careful of his stamina." (Aug 13, 1970)
- SCORPIO**: Paul Scholes. "He's a really good player, but he's got to be careful of his stamina. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- LIBRA**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- SAGITTARIUS**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- LIBRA**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- TAURUS**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- VIRGO**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- LIBRA**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)
- PISCES**: David Beckham. "A really good looking player, but a bit of a show-off. He's got a lot of talent, but he's got to learn to control it." (Aug 13, 1970)

Striking signs for the three lions as England dance to the music of the spheres

FIRST, the bad news for England: there are more Librans, renowned for indecisiveness and laziness, in their side than any other star sign. Now the good news: the two main strikers will have the benefit of added energy and adrenalin because they are the only players who have Mars, planet of aggression, drive and athleticism, in conjunction with the Sun.

While the stars appear to indicate that Tony Adams should be especially vigilant to eradicate any tendency towards casualness, both Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham will be turbocharged in attack.

As for the group matches themselves, the opener looks promising. The second appears routine and the third offers outstanding prospects for the team if not for their coach Glenn Hoddle. They are poised to unfold as a counter-attack. On the 16th against Tunisia in Marseille, the air and fire signs (Shearer, Adams, Paul Ince, David Batty, Graeme Le Saux and Sheringham) should work well during the first half with the water and earth signs (David Seaman, Gary Neville, Sol Campbell, David Beckham and Paul Scholes) gaining ground and showing most stamina in the second half.

On the 22nd against Romania in Toulouse, only Shearer and Beckham will provide the thrills in an unbalanced encounter. The fire signs will be constant pressure, and with the crowd behind them, Batty, Sheringham and Shearer will rise to the challenge.

England is an Aries country, so Sheringham is particularly good day for Hoddle. There are more Librans in this team than any other sign, so look out for their tendencies in midfield. The overall pattern is encouraging, though: the hard-working team members are likely to be the earth signs - Seaman (not too much work, one hopes), Campbell and Beckham. The fire signs will be constant pressure, and with the crowd behind them, Batty, Sheringham and Shearer will rise to the challenge.

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Guivarc'h to become a Geordie

NEWCASTLE believe they have won a six-clause chase for the French World Cup striker Stephane Guivarc'h. Lazio, Rangers, Arsenal, Internazionale and Bayern Munich are also pursuing the 26-year-old striker, who scored 11 goals in 21 appearances for France last season.

A St James' Park official said, "Guivarc'h is going nowhere but here."

It is believed that the 26-year-old had agreed to move to Tyneside provided Newcastle stayed in the Premiership, but the two clubs have yet to reach a deal and the fee may prove a stumbling block.

Newcastle are ready to pay 24 million but Arsenal are holding out for a club record and the price will rocket if Guivarc'h is a World Cup success. He was top scorer in the French First Division last season with 21 goals.

The Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish is expected to watch him in France's opening game against South Africa in Marseille on Friday.

John Gregory, the Aston Villa manager, has warned his five contract rebels that they will be transfer-listed if they do not sign new deals by July 15.

Bosnich, Gary Charles, Mark Draper, Julian Joachim and Riccardo Scimeca have 12 months left on their existing contracts and next summer would be entitled to walk away on Bosman-ruling free transfers.

Gregory, however, is ready to sell them within the next month if they do not commit themselves to a long-term future at Villa Park. He is anxious to avoid a repeat of last season's lengthy negotiations with Steve Staunton, which ultimately failed to persuade the Republic of Ireland defender to stay.

Gregory, who on Friday paid 24.5 million to Bolton for the midfielder Alan Thompson, said: "Let me state categorically that I don't want anyone to leave Villa. But if the five players going into the last year of their contracts decide to turn down the new deals they have been offered, then they will be put up for sale."

Southampton's cash-rich Jones adds striker Zittelli to his wish-list as Slough sell their star

Noam Friedlander

DAVID JONES, the Southampton manager, has opened negotiations to sign the French striker David Zittelli from the relegated German side Karlsruher. Zittelli, 26, out of contract this summer, will come for talks next week with a view to moving to The Dell on a free transfer. Jones has been handed 210 million to strengthen his squad, following Kevin Davies's sale to Blackburn, and is also tracking the Belgian forward Emile Mpenza. Newcastle's Darren Peacock and Spurs' David Howells.

The Aldershot Town manager George Borg has signed the veteran England Semi-professional striker Gary Abbott from Slough Town for a club-record 28,000. Abbott, 33, has scored more than 150 goals in non-league football including 21 for Slough last season, but his departure could signal the beginning of the end for Slough after their directors pulled out of the Vauxhall Conference next season citing financial difficulties.

The holiday firm Pontins has extended its sponsorship of English reserve-team football with a new two-year deal with the Central League.

The Football League recorded the best attendance for 38 years last season with 8.3 million people passing through the turnstiles at Nationwide Division One games.

He also claimed that MacLeod tried to increase the terms of his own contract last October, four months after arriving at Parkhead.

South of the border, John Stockwell resigned yesterday after three years as chairman of Halifax Town to spend more time running his textile company.

Stockwell joined the Halifax board in August 1992, months before the club was relegated from the Football League, and saw the side lift the Vauxhall Conference title last season to return.

Six-page sports section

France 98

Star struck England's horoscopes revealed 15
Battista beats up Argentinian hopes 14
World Cup round-up 14

Smart Alec

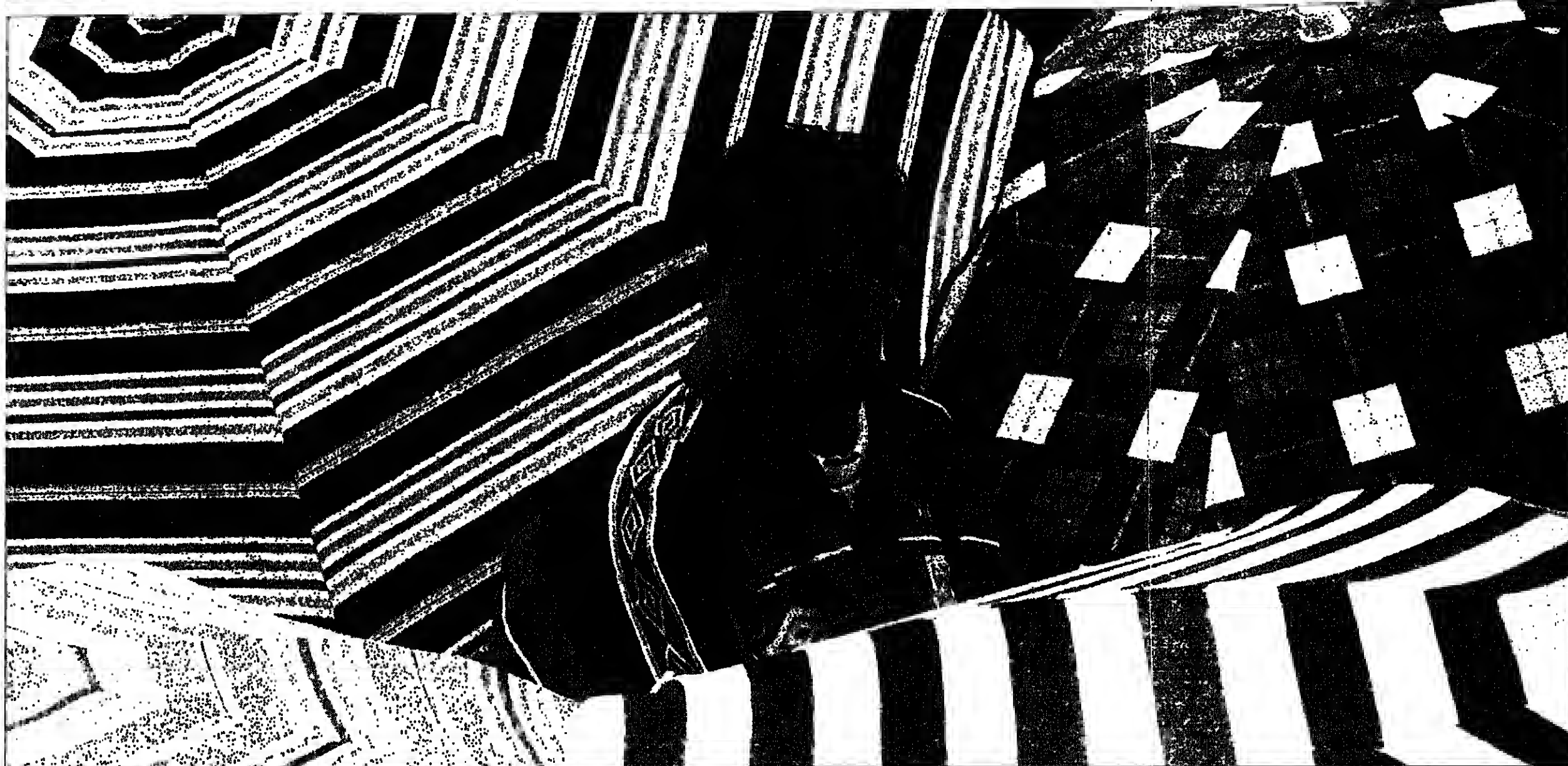
Brave Stewart takes heart from Test washout

11

The Guardian Sport

Tuesday June 9 1998 www.football.guardian.co.uk

France 98 The countdown to kick-off



Don't forget the broly... the England coach Glenn Hoddle prepares to swap Bisham Abbey for La Baule yesterday with every confidence that he will be on duty until after the World Cup final

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BAYON

Hoddle packs bags for the duration

Martin Thorpe on an upbeat England squad that today flies out for the front line

GLENN HODDLE did not quite go as far as his 1966 counterpart Alf Ramsey and predict that England will win the World Cup. But, as the squad leaves for France 98 this morning, the England coach has made plans for a very long stay.

Travel and hotels are already booked for England's appearance in the final on July 12 and all other preparations have been made on the assumption that they will be

playing the maximum seven games.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't think we could win it," said Hoddle yesterday. "But not even the Brazilian coach can say we are going to win the World Cup. All I can say is that all we've been doing for the players is geared to performing for seven games. That's not arrogance, that's just professionalism. You've got to make the players think that way."

This multi-million pound global extravaganza, which

will empty most streets in most parts of the planet for four weeks, kicks off tomorrow with Scotland playing Brazil. But before then England go to Caen for a small but important game behind closed doors against the French first division side, and then on to their training camp at La Baule.

England will then have to wait until Monday to reveal themselves to the world in their first game against Tunisia. And, though Hoddle admits he knows his starting

line-up, those interviewing him yesterday also knew the pointlessness of asking.

With those same journalists beginning to call time on stories about Paul Gascoigne's boozing mission and Teddy Sheringham's boozing intermission, the nation is beginning to focus on the main event and the players are gradually sensing the full magnitude of what is about to befall them.

"Wherever we travel now, just coming to the training ground, we get people outside

their houses cheering us," said Hoddle. "There's a buzz around the country and it has given us a bit of a buzz too."

"There is a new excitement among the players and an edge in training. I think they just can't wait to get out there."

But, though there are nerves, there is, Hoddle insists, no fear. A series of impressive results by England, beginning with their semi-final appearance in Euro 96, top place in a tough World Cup qualifying group including Italy, plus overall victory

tally and physically as well as possible. At the end of the day, if it goes wrong it goes wrong but at least the approach would have been right."

Failure is something which destroyed the England career of one of Hoddle's predecessors, Graham Taylor, and it nearly destroyed the man himself. Eventual failure even brought the sack for the great Ramsey, the only England manager to win the World Cup. So Hoddle knows the expectations and the pressures which attend his task.

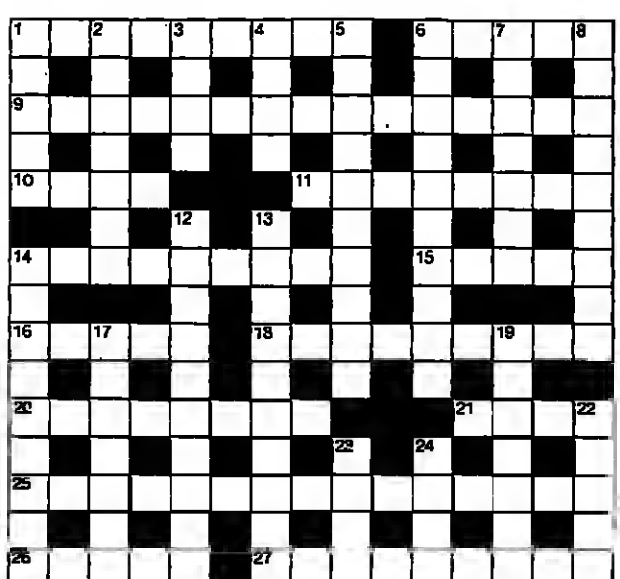
Ultimately his spirituality will help him see failure in a wider context. For now he is

not even contemplating it. "I've not even thought about not getting into the second round, for instance," he said. "If that happens I'll deal with it then. I don't need to worry about it now."

The fear he acknowledges exists is the age-old concern that some England fans will once again produce fighting spirit of the wrong sort. "I want our fans to enjoy themselves and support England," said Hoddle. "We don't want anyone going to the World Cup if they're not going to get behind the team. They will be an extended part of our team out there."

Guardian Crossword No 21,296

Set by Gordius



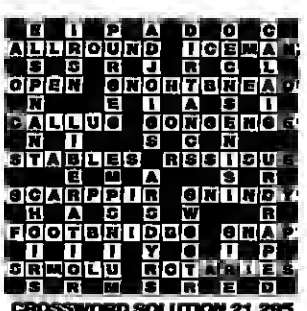
Across

- 1 It's hard to be made ill with coos — but this one may be (9)
- 6 Knight, first class, goes to Arab state (5)
- 9 Junk mail? (7,4,4)
- 10 Peterborough may be said to be 1 across (4)
- 11 Deep trouble for front half of horse to stand (8)
- 14 Leading journalist changes for Charing Cross (9)
- 15 Jollification in bed in Germany (5)
- 16 Fruit can be very musical (5)
- 18 At the heart of storm damage in Newcastle initially (9)
- 20 Listened, but not in order. Engaged? (8)
- 21 Many involved in charge for scam (4)

- 25 Infer no council awards can be made (4,1,10)
- 26 Not the town for top people? (5)
- 27 Transport returns for girl student intellectually challenged (9)

Down

- 1 Collect used in a service (5)
- 2 Prank taken in by investigators — it's a plant (7)
- 3 Alter ego involved in filthy deeds (4)
- 4 Country boy without a name (4)
- 5 Struggling went on to the finish (10)
- 6 Write in ship's log about Boots, for example (10)
- 7 Leading lady in a straw hat — that's fishy (7)
- 8 It's fashionable to relate shock treatment to the brain (9)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,295

- 12 A man's shirt torn by accident (5,5)
- 13 Native, that is, sounding alien (10)
- 14 College name a fellow for rival press (9)
- 17 To consult an augurer may bear fruit (7)
- 19 Mansion whose erection is unlikely to be fruitful? (7)
- 22 Reverse pole vault took in judges (5)
- 23 He turns his back for the most part on strike leader (4)
- 24 Japanese sport amounts to nothing (4)

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